

INFALLIBILITY AS A THEOLOGICAL  
CONCEPT

A STUDY IN THE USE OF THE CONCEPT 'INFALLIBLE'  
IN THE WRITINGS OF B.B. WARFIELD AND C.A. BRIGGS

TREVOR WILLIAM JOHN MORROW

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

1983.



*For Carys,*

*My loving Wife and my best Friend*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to many people for being able to complete this study. I would like to thank the Very Revd. Professor John McIntyre, Mrs. Elizabeth Templeton and the Revd. Dr. Alan Lewis who have acted as supervisors with courtesy and patience. My thanks also are due to the staff of the libraries at New College, Edinburgh, Princeton Seminary, New Jersey, Westminster Seminary, Pennsylvania, and the Presbyterian Historical Association in Philadelphia. Their help was greatly appreciated. Thank you to my typist Rosaleen O'Riordan who read my hand written script so accurately. Much of this thesis was written while pastoring Churches in Bangor and Lucan. Thanks are due especially to the Kirk Session of Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church and in particular their Minister, David Burke who not only encouraged me to finish but gave me six months sabbatical leave to complete the task. Most of all, I want to thank Carys (my wife) who in love has 'endured all things'.

Infallibility is not a claim made for this thesis, either in form or content. The errors are mine.

\* \* \* \* \*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	(i)
INTRODUCTION	1.
CHAPTER I. - LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN AND THEOLOGICAL DISAGREEMENT	2.
1. Wittgenstein's Approach to Religion	3.
2. 'Philosophical Investigations' and the Use of Language	5.
3. 'Philosophical Investigations' and Theological Disagreement	15.
(i) Wittgenstein and Theology	16.
(ii) Inferences from Wittgenstein for Philosophical Theology	20.
(iii) Wittgensteinian Reasons for Theological Disagreement	21.
(a) Different Pictures	21.
(b) Confusion of Surface and Depth Grammar	22.
(c) Confusion of Language Games	22.
(d) Theological Language is <u>sui generis</u>	23.
4. The Method to be employed and its Problems	23.
Problems (i) Wittgenstein's meaning of the Word 'Usage'	23.
(ii) Are the demands of the method too great?	29.
(iii) Is Wittgenstein too imprecise to formulate a method?	30.
5. The Approach of the Thesis stated	31.



	<u>PAGE</u>
CHAPTER II. - B.B. WARFIELD'S USE OF THE TERM 'INFALLIBLE' IN HIS UNDERSTANDING OF HOLY SCRIPTURE	32.
BIOGRAPHY	
I. Warfield's View of Knowledge and Authority	34.
(i) Warfield and Augustine	34.
The Problem of Certitude	34.
Rationalism	35.
Theistic Intuitionism	36.
The Place of Scripture in the Revelational Activity of God	40.
(ii) Warfield and Scottish Realism	
Three reasons showing Scottish realist influence on Warfield	43.
1. The Princeton Tradition	43.
2. Warfield's mentor Charles Hodge and Scottish Realism	44.
3. Warfield's Use of the Scottish School	46.
The Scottish Philosophy and its Tenets in Warfield	48.
1. Intuitionism- not exclusively Scottish, also Augustine	48. 52.
- Primacy of Intellect	52.
- All knowledge of the same type	53.
- No dichotomy between Theoretic and Religious Knowledge	53.
2. The Empirical Method	53.
Warfield's Interaction with Augustine	54.
His Apologetic Method re. Biblical Authority	55.
His use of the Critical Apparatus	57.
His use of History to Accredit Faith	58.

	<u>PAGE</u>
3.The Status of Reason and Understanding	59.
(iii)Warfield's Theological Orientation	65.
A.The Principle of Authority and the Need for Theism	65.
B.The Apologetic Method	67.
C.Subjective Factors in his Theology	69.
1.The <u>Sensus Divinitatis</u>	72.
2.Sin - the Obstacle to Faith seen in	73.
(a) Calvin	73.
(b) Augustine	75.
(c) Depravity	76.
(d) Noetic effects of Sin	76.
3.Faith as <u>fiducia</u>	80.
4.The Work of the Holy Spirit in - Regeneration	83. 83.
- <u>Testimonium Spiritus Sancti</u>	84.
5.Religion and the Study of Theology	89.
A Summary of Warfield's Theological Orientation	94.
II.WARFIELD'S DOCTRINE OF BIBLICAL AUTHORITY	96.
1.Warfield's view of Revelation	96.
1. The Theological Milieu	96.
2. Revelation, General and Special	100.
(a) Revelation and Historical Development	100.
(b) Modes of Revelation - External Manifestation	103. 103.
Internal Suggestion	104.
Concursive Operation	107.
(c) Revelation and Holy Scripture	109.

	<u>PAGE</u>
II.The Bible as the Word of God	110.
(1) Exegetical Considerations	110.
(a) Attitude of New Testament Writers to the Old Testament	110.
(b) II Timothy 3:16	113.
(c) II Peter 1:19-21	114.
(d) John 10:34f	115.
(2) Apologetic Considerations	117.
(a) Divine Origin of the Bible - What is Reasonable?	119.
(b) Church Doctrine and Biblical Authority	122.
(c) Religious Needs	125.
III.The Phenomena of Scripture	127.
(1) The Relationship between the Divine and Human Elements in Scripture	127.
(2) Warfield's Logic in approaching the Phenomena	132.
(3) The Practical Problems	134.
(i) Errors?	134.
(ii) New Testament quotes from the Old Testament	136.
(iii) Corrupt Text and the Original Autographs	138.
(iv) The Formation of the Canon	139.
IV.A Scientific Approach to the Scriptures	141.
(1) A Positive Stance to 19th Century Scholarship	141.
(2) Warfield and Textual Criticism	143.
(3) The Anti-Supernatural Bias	146.
(4) The Fear of Mysticism in combining the Critical with Faith	153.
(5) Warfield and Limited Inspiration.	155.
V.Warfield's Use of Holy Scripture	161.
A. Answers to David Kelsey's Questions on the Uses of Scripture	162.
B. Warfield's Exegetical Method and Christology.	162.



	<u>PAGE</u>
(1) Warfield's Method over and against a more Critical Approach	163.
(2) Exegesis and the Deity of Christ	168.
(3) Exegesis of Passages which appear to question his Conclusions on Christology	176.
(4) Devotional Writings	184.
C. Warfield's View of Infallibility as a Controlling Factor in terms of what is permissible Exegetically.	188.
(1) Implications for Exegesis	188.
(2) Implications for Apologetics	191.
(3) The Exegesis of Problem Passages	191.
(4) The Use of Scripture in Worship	192.
(5) The Logic of Warfield's Argument and the Infallible Scriptures.	193.
 CHAPTER III. - BRIGGS USE OF THE TERM 'INFALLIBLE' IN HIS UNDERSTANDING OF HOLY SCRIPTURE	 197.
BIOGRAPHY	197.
I. Briggs' View of Knowledge and Authority	203.
The Scientific Method and the Bible in the 19th Century	203.
- in Britain	203.
- in America	207.
Direct Influences on Briggs' Perspective	209.
German Scholarship	209.
Schleiermacher	210.
William Robertson Smith	212.
Briggs' Epistemological Dualism	217.
Briggs' View of Knowledge and Authority and Religious Certainty	218.
A. The Authority of the Reason - Reason a fountain of Divine Authority supported by:	219.

	<u>PAGE</u>
1. The Westminster Confession of Faith	221.
2. Holy Scripture	223.
3. The Condition of the World	225.
4. The Nature of Man	225.
5. Church History	226.
6. Christian Experience	227.
Briggs' position qualified in response to Charges of Heresy that his Thesis undermines the Authority of Scripture	227.
B. The Authority of the Church - the Church a fountain of Divine Authority supported by	229.
1. The Westminster Doctrine of the Church	229.
2. Holy Scripture	231.
3. The Condition of the World	231.
4. Church History	231.
5. Biblical History	231.
6. Christian Experience	232.
7. Prophetically	232.
Briggs' position qualified in response to Charges of Heresy that his Thesis undermines the Authority of Scripture	233.
C. The Authority of Holy Scripture - the Scriptures as a fountain of Divine Authority. The Bible as an infallible rule of faith and practice seen in the Theology of the Bible.	235.
Briggs clarifies his understanding of 'Fountain of Authority'. How the three fountains relate.	237.
1. The Relation of Reason to the Scriptures	241.
2. The Relation of the Scriptures to the Reason	243.
3. The Relation of the Church to the Bible	244.
4. The Relation of the Bible to the Church	246.
The three fountains united in Christ <u>'the Logos'</u> .	247.

	<u>PAGE</u>
Infallibility and Divine Authority	249.
1. The Infallibility of the Reason	250.
2. The Infallibility of the Church - the sevenfold qualification of The Authority of the Roman Catholic Church	252.
3. The Infallibility of the Bible six limitations	256.
(1) Limited to <u>Doctrines</u> regarding Faith and Morals	257.
(2) Limited to Doctrines with <u>Universal Significance</u>	258.
(3) Limited to matters that concern Human Salvation	258.
(4) Limited to <u>Practical Matters</u>	258.
(5) Limited to the <u>Substance of</u> <u>Doctrine</u>	259.
(6) Limited to the <u>Divine Spirit</u> speaking in the Scriptures	259.
II. Briggs' Doctrine of Biblical Authority	262.
The Divine Authority to be found in 'Biblical Theology'	262.
A. The Religion of the Bible	262.
Theophanies	262.
Cultic Institutions	263.
B. The Faith of the Bible	264.
God	264.
Man	265.
Redemption	266.
C. The Ethics of the Bible	268.
D. The Messiah - the unifying theme in Biblical Theology	269.
The Bible as the Word of God	271.
1. Practical and Theological Reasons	271.
(1) The Scriptures as a Means of Grace.	271.
The relationship between Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures	272.
- Demands from the reader attention	276.
appropriation	278.
practicing faith	279.



	<u>PAGE</u>
(2) Inspiration of the Scriptures	279.
Briggs' view of Plenary Inspiration	280.
Inspiration and Infallibility	282.
Verbal Inspiration rejected because:	283.
(1) An opinion of dogmaticians and not taught in the symbols of the Church	283.
(2) It is argued that words and thoughts cannot be separated	284.
(3) Textual Criticism makes it untenable	284.
(3) The Testimonium Spiritus Sancti	287.
The Princeton view that Apostolicity is necessary for Canonicity is rejected because:	288.
(1) It leaves Biblical Authority at the mercy of Historical Criticism	288.
(2) Faith based on such reasoning cannot produce Infallibility and Certainty	289.
(3) It places Biblical Authority at the mercy of Literary Criticism	289.
11. Apologetic Reasons	291.
(1) Briggs' view of Infallibility necessary for Certainty	291.
(2) A rejection of Inerrancy necessary to cope with the Critical Theories The Bible Infallible re. its intent	291.
(a) The Scriptures do not claim Inerrancy	294.
(b) Inerrancy is a dangerous doctrine in giving authority only to Original Autographs	295.
(c) Believing Critical Scholarship strengthens the Credibility of Scripture	296.
(3) Briggs' view <sup>of</sup> the Orthodox Doctrine of the Church	297.



	<u>PAGE</u>
(a) The historic view of the Church	298.
(b) The history of Scholasticism	300.
(c) The Westminster Divines not Scholastics	302.
(d) The Teaching of the Westminster Confession of Faith	304.
(e) The history of Criticism within Evangelical Christianity	308.
III. The Phenomena of Scripture	309.
1. The Divine and Human Factors in the Scripture	309.
Briggs' rejection of a Christological Analogy re. Scripture	310.
The Human contains the Divine	310.
2. The Logic and Stance re. the Phenomena	312.
The Inductive Method untrammelled by Dogma	313.
3. Briggs and the Problems of the Phenomena	314.
Textual Errors and Canonicity solved by the Testimony of the Spirit in the Scriptures	315.
IV. A Scientific Approach to the Scriptures	319.
1. Briggs Positive Attitude to Scientific Criticism	319.
General Criticism	320.
Historical Criticism	320.
Literary Criticism	321.
The Value of Criticism with respect to the Bible	323.
2. Briggs use of the Tools of Science in Biblical Criticism	325.
The Integrity of the Scriptures	326.
The Authenticity of the Scriptures	328.
The Literary Forms of the Scriptures - History	330.
Fiction	331.
The Credibility of the Scriptures	332.

	<u>PAGE</u>
3. The Scientific Methods and Biblical Theology	332.
Avoiding the Mystical, Scholastic and Speculative and being Evangelical	332.
The Rise and Development of Biblical Theology	333.
The Method of Biblical Theology as Historical and Exegetical	336.
V. Briggs' Use of Holy Scripture	340.
1. Briggs' own views on Interpretation	340.
(1) Grammatical	341.
(2) Logical and Rhetorical	341.
(3) Historical	342.
(4) Comparative	342.
(5) The Literature of Interpretation Considered	343.
(6) Doctrinal	343.
(7) Practical	343.
2. Briggs' Use of Scripture	344.
A. Answer to D. Kelsey's Questions on the Use of Scripture	344.
B. Briggs' Exegetical Method re. Christology	345.
(1) Briggs' Exposition of the Life of Jesus as Historical Event	345.
(2) Briggs' Defence of the Super- natural in Jesus in particular the Virgin Birth	350.
(3) Christ and the Messianic Ideal	352.
A Summary of Briggs' Use of the Infallible Scriptures	358.
C. The Logic of Briggs' Argument and the Infallible Scriptures	359.
CONCLUSIONS -	361.
Semantic Usage	365.
Speech-Act Usage	375.
Speech-Activity Usage	381.
BIBLIOGRAPHY	387.

## INTRODUCTION

There are five practical reasons for engaging in this study.

- (1) To assess the usefulness of the descriptive analytical method, as developed in the later writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein, for Theology.
- (2) To apply the method specifically in the context of theological disagreement. Does it work?
- (3) To help Churchmen to listen sensitively and with openness to those with whom they profoundly disagree.
- (4) To further research the writings of B.B. Warfield and C.A. Briggs whose contributions are a watershed for Reformed Theology in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries.
- (5) To shed some light on a parallel debate to that between Warfield and Briggs which is presently taking place in the U.S.A., between men like Jack Rogers and Donald McKim, on the one side and James Packer and John Woodbridge on the other. The contemporary issue - the infallibility of Scripture.



## CHAPTER I.

### LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN AND THEOLOGICAL DISAGREEMENT

Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein cannot be ignored. His influence on two movements in twentieth century philosophy, Logical Positivism and Linguistic Analysis, is quite remarkable. Since the publication of his most important work 'Philosophical Investigations', philosophy departments far beyond the reaches of Cambridge where he worked, have been preoccupied with the distilling of his thought and its implications.

In that area of reflection which straddles philosophy and religion, known as Philosophy of Religion, there has been in the light of Wittgenstein's later thought an attempt to discern the nature of religious language. There is a sense in which this thesis is a continuation of this study but with a two-fold shift of emphasis. First we shall be concerned with the language of theology rather than of religion.<sup>1</sup> In particular our interest is in one theological word 'infallible'. Second we shall be focusing on how theologians use the same word differently thus resulting in theological disagreement.

The focus of this chapter is on articulating a method from Wittgenstein's 'Philosophical Investigations' which is appropriate to our theological sphere of interest.

- 
1. A radical distinction between the language of theology and the language of religion is not here implied. The difference is comparable to the language of the scientist with that of the mythical man in the street. They are both responding to the same reality which means there will be continuity in the use of language and of meaning. But the professional scientist because of his training will have developed and will develop modes of thought and speech which he considers necessary to understand and to clarify his understanding of empirical reality which he perceives in greater depth than the man in the street confronted with the same experience. In the same way, the theologian develops a language which he considers necessary to understand and to clarify his understanding of his common experience with the man of faith.

First, we shall say something about the relation of his person and writing to religion in general; second, his 'Philosophical Investigations' will be expounded with reference to theology; and third we shall seek from this guidelines and directions relevant to the functioning of theological language.

1. Wittgenstein's approach to religion can be considered in the light of the sort of man he was and the kind of books in which he delighted. He was certainly no orthodox believer, but his life was characterised by intense passion and uncompromising self-integrity. Throughout his life, which he saw as a vocation, he sought to bring his readers and hearers into a state of self-consciousness which would deliver them from both their rational and irrational prejudices. It is for this reason he developed his descriptive method. He wished to know things as they really were. Hudson quotes him as saying that Spinoza and Kant interfere with one's belief but his method does not. His honesty reaches its clearest expression in his later writings such as the 'Philosophical Investigations', in which in the light of his new perception, he is willing to contradict and reject what he had spent years formulating in e.g. the 'Tractatus'. Using 'religious' in its widest possible sense one might say that it was Wittgenstein's religious consciousness or sense of the ineffable that caused him to reject the logical structures of the 'Tractatus' and to be opened to the diversity and differences in meaningful language as expounded in the 'Philosophical Investigations'. Wittgenstein bears witness to this religious perception when in a paper at Cambridge in 1929 he claimed that he himself had "the experience of feeling absolutely safe . . . I mean the state of mind in which one is inclined to say 'I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens'."<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Quoted by D. Hudson, Ludwig Wittgenstein (Lutterworth, London 1968), p.7.

Wittgenstein had not always been so religious.

B. Russell in an obituary in 1951 wrote "He had been dogmatically anti-christian, but in this respect he changed completely. The only thing he ever told me about this was once in a village in Galicia during the war he found a bookshop containing only one book, which was Tolstoy on the gospels. He bought the book, and according to him, it influenced him profoundly."<sup>1</sup>

The books therefore which influenced him most were those written by men, like Tolstoy, of existential involvement in life: Augustine, Pascal, Kierkegaard, George Fox and William James. The result for Wittgenstein's thinking was as follows: First, he was impatient of rational proofs for the existence of God. Men of faith, for him, could not stand aloof from the ground of their existence to prove through reason what they could not but believe. Second, he places the disciplines of aesthetics, ethics and religion on the same plane, on the basis that in the language related to such disciplines their concepts and their contexts of use frequently overlap. Third, he does not demand that a criterion of reasonableness applicable to science be placed before religious statements. But e.g. in his final lecture on religious belief when he considered the status of belief claims in religious expressions and the reasonableness of various claims of a particular religious belief he argued that reasonableness is related to the context and purpose of usage. Fourth, in his 'Lectures and Conversations' he deals at length with the affirmation of belief in the last judgement. Here there is specific reference to theological disagreement, for he asks the question, 'Why does one believe in it and another not?' What he considers one to be doing

---

1. Russell B., Ludwig Wittgenstein (Mind 1951) an obituary pp.297-298.



when affirming belief in the last judgement we shall consider later, but it is his contention that disagreement is not due to the perspicuous or enigmatic nature of the empirical evidence.

To summarise Wittgenstein's approach to religion one can use N. Malcolm's oft-quoted phrase that there seemed to be in him "the possibility of religion . . . he looked on religion as a 'form of life' in which he did not participate, but with which he was sympathetic and which greatly interested him."<sup>1</sup>

2. In 'Philosophical Investigations' there is little direct reference to religious or theological language, but since the purpose of his writing is to demonstrate the diversity of language usage and to assemble reminders about how to manage the linguistic tools we possess for any purpose, then religious language will be included.

The assumption which undergirded Wittgenstein's 'Tractatus' was that language depicts the logical structure of what is. There would be only one valid logical proposition for each unique state of affairs. It would be the responsibility of the philosopher to make known the authentic logical structure of the world. For there to be direct identity between language and reality words had to have their meaning in naming or standing for something. It is such a thesis that Wittgenstein came to reject.

There are at least five reasons for Wittgenstein's objections to his earlier thesis.

---

1. Malcolm, N., Ludwig Wittgenstein : A Memoir (including a Biographical Sketch by G.H. Von Wright) (London, 1958).



1. The Augustinian conception of language, as Wittgenstein calls it from a remark of Augustine in his confessions that he learned to understand the speech of his elders by understanding which objects were signified by different words, is true for only one of many 'language games' (a term we will later expound). This mode requires ostensive definition, but ostensive definition, argues Wittgenstein, is only successful where there is pre-understanding in a life situation between the teacher and the pupil; e.g. to point to a vase and say 'red' could lead the pupil to believe that all vases were red, or all open-ended containers were red, or all objects which rested with flat bottoms were red. Ostensive definition would appear to be invalid for many words which we use like if, but, and, or numerals like 1, 7, 11, 4.

2. In the argument

"a word has no meaning if nothing corresponds to it - it is important to note that the word 'meaning' is being used illicitly if it is used to signify the thing that 'corresponds' to the word. That is to confound the meaning of a name with the bearer of the name. When Mr. N.N. dies one says that the bearer of the name dies, not that the meaning dies. And it would be nonsensical to say that, for if the name ceased to have meaning it would make no sense to say 'Mr. N.N. is dead'."<sup>1</sup>

3. He rejects the notion that facts can have a logical form directly corresponding to language. These logical facts are conceived in the 'Tractatus' as being absolutely simple or non-composite. Wittgenstein now argues

---

1. Wittgenstein, L., Philosophical Investigations, Trans. by G.E.M. Anscombe, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1963, p.40.

that whether a thing is composite or non-composite is not in itself an absolute, but is dependent upon how the language is used.

"But isn't a chess-board, for instance, obviously and absolutely composite? You are probably thinking of the composition out of thirty two white and thirty two black squares. But could we not also say, for instance, that it was composed of the colours black and white and the schema of squares?"<sup>1</sup>

There are obviously different ways of looking at a chess-board which will greatly affect how one decides upon the complexity or simplicity of the object. Questions, therefore, which suppose absolute complexity and simplicity, quite apart from context, are unanswerable.

4. In the 'Philosophical Investigations' Wittgenstein rejects the notion of a proposition having a correct or incorrect form. For Wittgenstein a proposition can only be understood or not understood. The analysing of a proposition into a more elementary proposition need not necessarily create clarity.

"Suppose that, instead of saying 'Bring me the broom,' you said 'Bring me the broomstick and the brush which is fitted on to it'! - isn't the answer: 'Do you want the broom? Why do you put it so oddly?' - Is he going to understand the further analysed sentence better?"<sup>2</sup>

5. Having rejected the view of language as a picture of reality he now sees it as a tool with a rich variety of uses.

---

1. Ibid., p.47.

2. Ibid., p.60.

"Think of the tools in a tool-box: There is a hammer, pliers, a saw, a screw-driver, a rule, a glue-pot, glue, nails and screws. - The function of words are as diverse as the function of these objects."<sup>1</sup>

It is to Wittgenstein's thesis, as to how language with such diverse usage can convey meaning, that we now turn.

At the heart of Wittgenstein's understanding of meaning is his notion of a 'language-game'. R.H. Bell describes it as

"... a complete unit of human linguistic behaviour, but it does not refer to all speech forms and their structure in a language family (say English or German), nor does it refer to a complete type of discourse (say legal, scientific, religious and so forth). By the concept of a 'language-game', Wittgenstein wants to show that the behaviour of people and their language are very closely woven together."<sup>2</sup>

Wittgenstein himself says:

"... the term 'language game' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life."<sup>3</sup>

Meaning, for Wittgenstein, cannot be considered through an abstract consideration of language picturing reality. The result will only be mental cramp. It is in the concrete life-situation that meaning is discovered. For it is how words are used within a particular setting or 'language-game' which determines their meaning.

1. Ibid., p.11.

2. R.H. Bell, op.cit., p.5.

3. Wittgenstein, op.cit., p.23.



Wittgenstein chose to use the concept of 'game' for our use of language after observing a football match. He concluded that we pass words to and fro in certain 'wholes' or activities, each of which has its own 'rules' and its own 'point' just as football has. From this analogy he makes the following deductions.

(a) Some training is needed to understand the rules and the purpose of the activity in games and in meaningful language usage.

(b) Various types of games have no one common property, e.g. ball games, card games and board games. They may have similar properties or 'family resemblances' but they may not be classified as a single phenomenon. Similarly different language-games have nothing in common to be called a language. There is no one definite element, or distinctive property, which must be possessed by them all in order for each to qualify as a language. The word 'language' (like the word 'game') is not the same of a single phenomenon but is rather the name of the class of an indefinite number of language-games. The games will have a family resemblance but, with the ease at which new language-games can appear, and because of the blurred borderline as to what is or is not a language-game, the number of different language-games is indefinite.

(c) In all games there are players and spectators. In a language-game concerning morality, the moralist who exhorts obedience to the categorical imperative is a player, while the moral philosopher who seeks to understand the rules and the point of the moral discourse is a spectator. The philosophers may only understand the language-game by watching how it is played as the soccer fan will only understand football through observation.

To demonstrate his thesis Wittgenstein, in the earlier part of his 'Philosophical Investigations', imagines a situation in which the bare essentials of language are realised.

"A is building with building-stones: There are blocks, pillars, slabs, and beams. B has to pass the stones, and that in the order in which A needs them. For this purpose they use a language consisting of the words 'block', 'pillar', 'slab', and 'beam'. A calls them out: - B brings the stone which he has learned to bring at such-and-such a call. - Conceive this as a complete primitive language."<sup>1</sup>

The point of Wittgenstein's illustration is that e.g. for the word 'slab' to be called out by A, the meaning is more than a name of an object, for B must know what to do when A says 'slab'. A wants the slab passed and B does not understand the meaning of 'slab' until he has learned that this is what A means. Here then is a primitive language-game the meaning of which is rooted in a life-situation. For the game to be played the life-situation or 'form of life' must exist and the rules must be learnt through observation.

Samples of language-games which Wittgenstein gives are:

"Giving orders and obeying them -  
Describing the appearance of an object,  
or giving its measurements -  
Constructing an object from a description  
(a drawing) -  
Reporting an event -  
Speculating about an event -  
Forming and testing a hypothesis -  
Presenting the results of an experiment  
in tables and diagrams -

---

1. Ibid., p.2.

Making up a story; and reading it -  
 Play-acting -  
 Singing catches -  
 Guessing riddles -  
 Making a joke; telling it -  
 Solving a problem in practical arithmetic -  
 Translating from one language into another -  
 Asking, thanking, cursing, greeting,  
 praying."<sup>1</sup>

All such language-games are expressions of a form of life. The form of life is so inseparably bound to the language-game that if e.g. a particular language may not ask a question, such a form of life will not exist in that sphere where such a language is used. Similarly says Wittgenstein "If a lion could talk we could not understand him,"<sup>2</sup> for his form of life would be so diverse from ours that the words used in his logically valid proposition would be without meaning.

Most of the 'Philosophical Investigations', as the title would suggest, concern the application of Wittgenstein's thesis to the function of a philosopher. A philosopher's primary responsibility in his "battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language",<sup>3</sup> is to understand. In the 'Tractatus', Wittgenstein saw the responsibility of the philosopher as one who corrected propositions (a view related to the notion of ideas depicting facts), now he sees his job to understand propositions. Misunderstanding of propositions arises from failing to distinguish one language-game from another or from making one particular game the only legitimate one. Normally we would not notice our error because:

- 
1. Ibid., p.23.
  2. Ibid., p.223.
  3. Ibid., p.109.



"The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity (one is unable to notice something - because it is always before one's eyes). The real foundations of his enquiry do not strike a man at all. Unless that fact has at some time struck him. - And this means: we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and most powerful."<sup>1</sup>

It is the philosopher's job to find out what is wrong. e.g. In deductive systems like mathematics and logic the law of non-contradiction is applicable - but need all language conform to such a law? If one asked me 'Is he efficient?' and the reply was 'Yes and No', would this be a ruinous contradiction? It would surely only be a contradiction if the language-game I was playing was the same as that of a logical deductive system.

It is the 'vocation' of a philosopher, therefore, to probe at depth into the real function of the sentences and propositions under scrutiny. To do this he will distinguish between the 'surface grammar' i.e. the way a word is used in the sentence, and the 'depth grammar' i.e. to come to an understanding of the language-game which is actually being used. The method used will be descriptive. "Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it. For it cannot give any foundation either. It leaves everything as it is."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.129.

2. Ibid., p.124.



"The aim of philosophical reasoning is what Wittgenstein calls complete clarity. It is characteristic of his whole conception of the nature of a philosophical problem, that this complete clarity does not lead to the solution of the problem, but to its disappearance. And to say that it disappears instead of being solved, is to emphasize that the origin of the philosophical perplexity is an error, or rather a misunderstanding - a misunderstanding of the logical grammar of the sentences concerned. When the misunderstanding has been healed, the source of the problem has not been 'solved' it has vanished."<sup>1</sup>

The philosopher must therefore be in a perpetual state of openness and repentance that might "remove the prejudice which stands in the way of doing this."<sup>2</sup> Only then will he begin to attain 'complete clarity' and to the disappearance of philosophical problems.

We shall now turn to a philosophical problem which he considers and to which he applies his thesis. He turns to the problem of inner or private sensations which are experienced by no-one but the individual. These private experiences are designated by words and have come to be regarded as names which allegedly describe or report the private sensation. Wittgenstein wishes to show that a private language cannot exist. The reason for this misunderstanding, he believes, is due to a confusion of language-games. He argues that words for private sensations are not names or reports or descriptions.

---

1. Hartnack Justus, Wittgenstein and Modern Philosophy, Translated by Maurice Cranston, Methuen, London, 1965, p.68.

2. Wittgenstein, op.cit., p.34.

"Let us imagine the following case. I want to keep a diary about the recurrence of a certain sensation. To this end I associate it with the sign 'S' and write this sign in a calendar for every day on which I have the sensation. - I will remark first of all that a definition of the sign cannot be formulated. - But still I can give myself a kind of ostensive definition. -How? Can I point to the sensation? Not in the ordinary sense. But I speak, or write the sign down, and at the same time I concentrate my attention on the sensation - and so, as it were, point to it inwardly. - But what is this ceremony for? for that is all it seems to be! A definition surely serves to establish the meaning of a sign. - Well, that is done precisely by the concentration of my attention; for in this way I impress on myself the connexion between the sign and the sensation. - But 'I impress it on myself' can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connexion right in the future. But in the present case I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right'."1

Wittgenstein is contending that I may only classify the sensation as 'S' if it is the same sensation. But can I know? What could be one's criterion for correctness? It is not by its very nature testable. One may be able to point to other contexts where one say 'it seems to me to be so' and these were valid so that they might be here; but Wittgenstein argues that in all valid cases the statement is, in principle, testable. It is however logically impossible to conceive of a method for determining whether one sensation was the same as another felt at another time. Since no criterion can be applied, argues Wittgenstein, 'S' cannot be a name.

---

1. Ibid., p.258.



It is Wittgenstein's contention that we have confused a language-game of naming with the actual language-game which takes place when we speak of our sensations. What then am I doing when e.g. I say 'I am in pain'? He rejects that it is a description of my behaviour for when I say 'I am in pain' it is not as a result of an inductive inference from my behaviour. One must examine the function of the proposition 'I am in pain'.

"How do words refer to sensations? There doesn't seem to be any problem here; don't we talk about sensations every day, and give them names? But how is the connection between the name and the thing named set up? The question is the same as, How does a human being learn the meaning of the names of sensations? - of the word 'pain' for example? Here is one possibility - words are connected with the primitive, the natural expressions of the sensations, and used in their place. A child has hurt himself and he cries; and the adults talk to him and teach him exclamations; and later sentences. They teach the child new pain-behaviour. So you are saying that the word 'pain' really means crying? On the contrary the verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it."<sup>1</sup>

For Wittgenstein therefore to say 'I am in pain' is a part, acquired by habit, of the pain-behaviour in itself.

To apply Wittgenstein's 'Philosophical Investigations' to theology in general, it is necessary to examine, first, how he speaks of theology in his own writings, second, to draw inferences from his work for the role of the philosophical theologian, and third, to outline some Wittgensteinian reasons for theological disagreement.

---

1. Ibid., p.244.

The most direct reference to theology in Wittgenstein's 'Philosophical Investigations' is the following quotation:

"Essence is expressed by grammar . . . Grammar, tells what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar)." <sup>1</sup>

There are two possible interpretations. First, Donald Hudson argues that "to be a religious believer is to participate in a language-game or universe of discourse" <sup>2</sup> all of which characterises a theistic form of life. Theology is related to religious belief as grammar is related to language. For just as grammar shows what would or would not make sense to say in a language so theology shows what would or would not make sense to say in religion. Various pictures or 'bliks' on life will produce a grammar in accordance with the perspective. The religious picture will produce a theological 'technique' for using the picture correctly. It is therefore the responsibility of the theologian to work out an understanding of God and the world in the light of his picture. Second, R.H. Bell sees in this Wittgenstein directing our attention to the relationship between theology and our language, and thus to our forms of life. Grammar, is read by Bell, as referring to the patterns which are formed by the total activity of speaking, the whole environment of a language situation. This means that when Wittgenstein correlates essence with grammar, he means to declare that what is is evident in our patterns of linguistic behaviour or grammar.

---

1. Ibid., pp.373-375.

2. Hudson, D., op.cit., p.58.

"When Wittgenstein talks about 'essences' he is referring to the 'bedrock' of our grammatical behaviour, the place where reason comes to an end; to the 'given' shown in the grammar of our natural languages."<sup>1</sup>

The emphasis in the latter is upon the 'essence' or 'what is'. Theology is therefore taken as an expression of 'what is'. Religious belief as a form of life has therefore a grammatical expression (theology) which is a true expression of reality. The emphasis in the former is upon 'the grammar' which does not spontaneously express 'essence' but is critically developed in the light of the picture or form of life used. One may, therefore, conclude from this that for Wittgenstein theology expresses reality in that it is a grammar emerging from a form of life. However, its grammatical validity may only be judged by those of a common perspective e.g. a religious belief like Theism. It is nevertheless possible for one outwith such a community to understand how the language is used in correlating 'essence' with 'grammar'. Wittgenstein does not therefore consider theology in order to evaluate its validity. (In spite of his experience of the ineffable, his aesthetic and ethical insights and his passionate involvement in life, he is not a theist, does not live in such a life-situation and therefore does not feel competent to so judge.) He merely wishes to understand, through description, how a theologian uses his language.

To consider how Wittgenstein understands theological affirmation it is necessary to go beyond the 'Philosophical Investigations' to his 'Lectures and Conversations' in which he discusses at some length belief

---

1. Bell, op.cit., p.18.



in a last judgement. It is Wittgenstein's contention that belief in a last judgement is not a prediction of an empirically observable event for empirical evidence is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition of religious belief. He gives an example of people who foresee the future and include within it a last judgement but who have no religious belief. Religious faith is also possible apart from empirical evidence. In fact "it must be called the firmest of all beliefs, because the man risks things on account of it which he would not do on things which are far better established for him."<sup>1</sup> Theological language may not be understood therefore as the language of science or history for the canons of meaningfulness and reasonability do not apply to both. It is as absurd to try and justify religious belief through a scientific hypothesis as it is to try and refute it. The indubitable arguments of the scientist will not shake the faith of one whose religion permeates all of his life.

"Suppose somebody made this guidance for life: believing in the last judgement. Whenever he does anything, this is before his mind. In a way, how are we to know whether he believes this will happen or not? Asking him is not enough. He will probably say he has proof. But he has what you might call an unshakeable belief. It will show not by reasoning or by appeal to ordinary grounds for belief, but rather for regulating for all his life."<sup>2</sup>

Wittgenstein calls this regulating norm a 'picture' in the foreground of our thinking. Religious belief therefore is for Wittgenstein using a certain picture. What is or is not permissible for the theologian to speak of will

---

1. L. Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, (Oxford, Blackwell), p.54.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.53-54.

be determined by how the picture is conceived of by the faithful. Wittgenstein therefore understands the theological affirmation of belief in a last judgement as a grammatical expression of a religious 'form of life'. However, how the picture corresponds to the reality and what is the nature of the reality, are questions beyond the competency of a linguistic analyst.

For Wittgenstein therefore the task of the philosopher and the theologian is not the same. The philosopher's calling is to understand, to clarify, to describe and therefore to cause to disappear our 'mental cramp'. The theologian's task is to create in accordance with his perspective or form of life. He will within his 'picture' use words like God, nature, man, knowledge. However these two spheres are not autonomous. The philosopher is especially unrestricted. This means that there is no area of linguistic usage which is uniquely his own. It will embrace that of theology, for the multifarious language-games which he is concerned with reflect the diverse forms of life including religious belief.

Paul Holmer indicates the relevance of Wittgenstein for theology, by replacing the word philosophy with that of theology, in his own translation of a paragraph from *Philosophische Bemerkungen*. It reads:

"Why is theology so complicated? It ought to be completely simple. Theology also unties those knots in our thinking which we have so unwisely put there; but its ways in untying must be as complicated as the knots are in tying . . . The complexity of theology is not in its subject matter but rather in our knotted understanding and personality."<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Paul L. Holmer, *Wittgenstein and Theology*, in *New Essays on Religious Language*, edited by Dallas M. High, New York, O.U.P., 1969.



One can see therefore as a task for philosophical theology that of linguistic analysis in order to aid the untying of theological knots.

"If one were to follow a Wittgenstein approach in theology, the very least that could be said is that one of the primary functions of theology would be the analysis of its own language (*italics his*) . . . The 'analytic theologian' would devote himself to the examination of the 'form of life' of religious experience and expression. His main task would be to clarify the grammar and meaning of theological language, not to justify it. Coming at theology in this way would cause the theologian to feel that many of the great debates and problems of historical theology are really pseudo-problems which arose because of an insensitive use and inadequate understanding of language."<sup>1</sup>

What then are the implications of such an approach to philosophical theology for theological disagreement?

Theological disagreement is of two varieties, first, that between believer and unbeliever and second, that between believers. The former we have already made reference to in our discussion of Wittgenstein's view of the last judgement. The unbeliever says 'I do not believe in the last judgement' and by that he means that there is no empirical evidence for an historical event of such a nature at the end of this age. The believer says 'I do believe in the last judgement' but Wittgenstein has already argued that the latter's belief is not on empirical grounds. What one does not believe and what the other does believe is quite different and they are therefore not contradicting one another. The words being used in each case may be the same

---

1. Jerry H. Gill. Wittgenstein and Religious Language, Theology To-day, April, 1964, pp.65-66.

but the context of usage affects their meaning. The point of disagreement therefore between believer and unbeliever is not over what each considers to be the 'last judgement' but rather over the use of different pictures in which the term 'last judgement' is used.

One may therefore conclude at this stage that disagreement between unbelievers and believers is inevitable, but that it is an incommunicable disagreement, for the language used by one to reflect his unique form of life may not contradict the affirmation of another form of life, when the language is used, except for verbal negation.

Theological disagreement is normally considered in terms of theologians, who believe, entering into debate with one another so that at a certain point orthodoxy is distinguished from heterodoxy. What then, according to Wittgenstein, are the reasons for such disagreement? There are at least four.

1. Theologians working within the same tradition and using the same language may be governed by different pictures. An example of this would be the theistic belief in the sovereignty of God. While all would affirm belief in such a concept its influence on how they conceive of God's action in e.g. providence would be quite different. A disciple of John Calvin means by divine sovereignty that everything happens as God has decreed it to take place. A disciple of Arminius sees God permitting to happen, in his sovereignty, those things which he has decreed. A disciple of Pelagius sees a sovereign God available in case he is needed. Three different pictures using the same linguistic concept will obviously create disagreement when the implications of such a picture affect how each thinks of man's freedom in a theodicy.



2. Theological disagreement may arise through the confusion of surface grammar with depth grammar.

The first concerns the use of a word in the construction of a sentence, the latter with its purpose in the form of life in which it plays a part. Take the expression recorded in John's gospel as part of the institution of the Lord's supper. This is my body which is broken for you. Disagreement over this statement has <sup>divided</sup> not only Roman Catholics from Protestants, but Calvinists, Lutherans and Zwinglians. To debate whether or not the language is literal or figurative is, for Wittgenstein, to disagree on the surface grammar. The problem will disappear when one is able to discern, through depth exegesis, the nature of the language-game being played.

3. This brings us to the third possible ground for disagreement, namely the confusion of one language-game with another. Many language-games are used in the religious community:

Giving orders and obeying them  
 Reporting an event  
 Making up a story; and reading it  
 Asking, thanking, cursing, greeting and praying.

When the expression 'This is my body' was used by Christ or is used by the celebrant - which game is being played? Obviously those who believe they are describing the appearance of an object will disagree with those who believe themselves to be engaged in a form of play-acting. The true meaning for Wittgenstein is determined by the language-game played. It may be that a religious rite has created its own game and therefore to impose 'meanings' characteristic of another language-game (like reporting an event) upon it is to misunderstand and to create theological ferment.

4. From the first three points the fourth follows.

It is that theological language can be sui generis and may not be without distortion in meaning reduced to the logic of mathematical deduction or scientific induction.

This means that apologists or theologians who seek to make the christian faith intelligible to the modern mind will create disagreement by presenting faith in God as being invariably of the same logical category as a scientific hypothesis or by reducing theological affirmation to the categories of human experience.

Before applying these insights from Wittgenstein to a particular theological problem, it is necessary for us to establish our methodology. In a sense it can be stated simply, i.e. To discover the meaning of a word, determine its use.

"For a large class of cases - though not for all - in which we employ the word 'meaning' it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language."<sup>1</sup>

However the problem centres on what Wittgenstein means by 'use'.

"It is one of the most central, and at the same time one of the least clear, notions in the writings of the later Wittgenstein."<sup>2</sup>

Some analytical philosophers object that:

"Wittgenstein's conception of the 'use' of a word or phrase is so unclear as to be useless and consequently

1. Wittgenstein, op.cit., Section 43.

2. Pitcher G., The Philosophy of Wittgenstein, (New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1964, p.229).



that Wittgenstein cannot offer a coherent theory of meaning or semantics."<sup>1</sup>

George Pitcher suggests five possible meanings for 'use'. First, "words are used as the materials of most of our speaking and writing."<sup>2</sup>

In this sense all words are identical and are therefore undistinguishable from one another and is therefore not relevant to Wittgenstein's concern.

Second, the grammatical aspect of the use of words, "includes knowing in what sort of linguistic contexts or frames the word can and cannot occur without grammatical oddity."<sup>3</sup>

Wittgenstein describes this as the 'surface-grammar' usage and secondary to his descriptive analysis.

Third, the speech-act aspect of the use of words. It is this account of meaning and use which J.L. Austin developed in 'How to do things with words' (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962) . Here the emphasis is on words actually performing certain jobs, such as issuing orders, and asking questions. Austin distinguishes between illocutionary acts (i.e. speech acts performed in saying something e.g. issuing an order) and perlocutionary acts (i.e. speech acts performed by saying something e.g. shocking someone).

Pitcher contends however, that:

- 
1. Ebersole Frank, Saying and Meaning, in Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophy and Language, edited by Alice Ambrose and Morris Lazerowitz, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1972.
  2. Pitcher, op.cit., p.230.
  3. Pitcher, Ibid., p.231.

"Wittgenstein does not often appeal to the speech-act aspect of the use of words; this aspect plays only an insignificant - indeed, almost no - part in his philosophy."<sup>1</sup>

James Bogen would agree:

"I believe . . . that although Wittgenstein's later work is generally compatible with 'speech act' theories, it does not include a theory of speech acts."<sup>2</sup>

Fourth, the speech-activities aspect of the use of words. This Pitcher relates to Wittgenstein's understanding of language-games.

"The use of words to do something ought to be distinguished from the use of words in doing something - by that I mean their use in the course of activities like telling a joke, relating an experience, instructing a student, presenting a report, and so on."<sup>3</sup>

Pitcher sees speech-activities as central to Wittgenstein's understanding of 'use' although he does recognise that speech-activities are narrower than language-games as used by Wittgenstein in that the former are exclusively linguistic, while the latter includes some non-linguistic behaviour.

Fifth, the semantic aspect of the use of words. Pitcher expounds his understanding of Wittgenstein thus.

---

1. Ibid., p.238.

2. James Bogen, Wittgenstein, Philosophy of Language, London, Routledge and Paul Kegan Ltd., 1972, p.200.

3. Pitcher, op.cit., p.233.

"A given word-group (e.g. a given sentence) is normally used only when certain conditions, which may be called semantic conditions, obtain - for example, when certain events have taken place, when the speaker is in a certain kind of situation, when a certain kind of object is present, and so on. To say this is to say that there are semantic regularities associated with the utterance of a given word-group. If two people, A and B, are having their dinner, with all the usual items on the table and with the salt-cellar near B, A can say 'Please pass the salt' without the least oddity, without deviating from any semantic regularities, for this is the kind of situation in which those words are generally uttered . . . And so there are . . . correlations, although not perfect ones between the use of certain words and the existence of certain semantic conditions. Words normally 'go with' certain semantic conditions, and do not 'go with' certain others."<sup>1</sup>

It is for this reason, claims Pitcher, that Wittgenstein repeatedly urges us to look at the circumstances in which a word or group of words is used. e.g. He tells us to look at the sort of conditions which exist in the world when we say 'The steps are determined by the formula . . .'

"We use the expression: 'The steps are determined by the formula . . .'. How is it used? - We may perhaps refer to the fact that people are brought by their education (training) so to use the formula  $y = x^2$ , that they all work out the same value for y when they substitute the same number for x. Or we may say: 'These people are so trained that they all take the same step at the same point when they receive the order 'add 3'' We might express this by saying: for these people the order 'add 3' completely determines every step from one number to

---

1. Pitcher, Ibid., p.235.



the next. (In contrast with other people who do not know what they are to do on receiving this order, or who react to it with perfect certainty, but each one in a different way.)"<sup>1</sup>

From this, it would appear that three possible aspects of 'use' are related to our concern i.e., the semantic, the speech-acts and the speech-activities. All three and especially the latter have been severely criticised not least for their impracticality.

J.N. Findlay, whose criticisms are said to be ". . . only of a radical use - theory carried to extremes, which constructs fables as to how we might have been taught the meaning of words in order to buttress apriori doctrines as to what we must or cannot mean."<sup>2</sup> argues that reference and meaning are more closely allied than Wittgenstein is willing to recognise.

"What I am saying is simply that we cannot fully say, in a great many cases, how an expression is used, without saying what sort of things it is intended to refer to, or to bring to mind, and just how or in what angle of light, it purports to refer to them, or to bring them to mind."<sup>3</sup>

or again

"In saying what the use of my expression is, I therefore have to say what, in the ordinary diction of logicians, they denote and connote, what their precise

- 
1. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, Section 189.
  2. J.N. Findlay, Use, Usage and Meaning, Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Suppl. Vol.35, (1961), pp.241-242.
  3. Ibid., p.233.

reference is or what their general scope, or how they contribute to connotation or denotation, and it is not thought possible to say how many expressions are used, without bringing in such connotative and denotative particulars."<sup>1</sup>

Peter Strawson contends in his paper 'on referring'<sup>2</sup>, which is a response to Russell's 'on denoting'<sup>3</sup>, that meaning and truth are two distinct logical categories, and that meaning is a function of sentences and expressions, whereas referring, with truth and falsity are functions of the use of sentences and expressions<sup>4</sup> and that one ought to be able to discern meaning without reference.

However, if the semantic aspect of 'usage' is valid, then reference to the semantic conditions in which the word or words are used will be necessary to analyse descriptively and to determine meaning. Our methodology therefore will not be non-referential.

The difficulty with developing a Wittgensteinian approach to 'speech-act analysis' is that, as Bogen has already been quoted as saying, his later work is compatible with such an Austinian approach, but does not explicitly teach it. Therefore to apply it in the sphere of theology we will be more dependent upon the distinctions such as perlocutionary and illocutionary, which Austin makes and which Wittgenstein does not consider.

The problems surrounding the application of Wittgenstein's thought concerning language-games and speech activities are more acute.

---

1. Ibid., p.234.

2. Peter Strawson, 'on referring', Essays in Conceptual Analysis, edited by Anthony Flew, 1956.

3. B. Russell, 'on denoting', Logic and Language, edited by Robert C. Marsh, 1956.

4. Op.cit., p.30f.

The first is whether or not the demands for such a study are too great and therefore impractical. Paul Holmer refers to this:

"In order to have an exhaustive and detailed account of the meanings for every form of speech, we would also need an absolutely exhaustive and accurate account, not only of everything in the talkers' world but also of the speaker too, his whims, desires, cares and so on."<sup>1</sup>  
J.N. Findlay concurs:

"This study of verbal manoeuvres, and of appropriate and justifying circumstances, must not, however, be confined to the simple instant of utterance: it must point backwards to the all-important situations in which use was learnt or taught and it must point forwards to the innumerable situations in which the utterance in question will again be found appropriate or abundantly justified. The study of use therefore includes a genealogy and a prognosis of the most indefinite and complex kind, much more extensive than any that occurs in a merely grammatical or philological study."<sup>2</sup>

For Findlay when one fully grasps the demands of Wittgenstein, namely that the 'use' spoken of is never private but public, and that no reference can be made to meaning that antedate the use of words in the actual speech activity, then:

". . . it cannot be carried out completely, and that no comprehensive account of use and usage can be given which does not contain some members of impure origin."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Paul Holmer, Language and Theology, Harvard Theological Review, Vol.58/3, July, 1965, p.254.
  2. Findlay, op.cit., p.235.
  3. Findlay, Ibid., p.236.



The validity of this criticism will be experimentally considered in the major part of this thesis, i.e. the value of Wittgenstein's approach will be judged by its 'usefulness'.

A further issue often raised is that of the imprecision of Wittgenstein in e.g. informing us as to how we might distinguish or identify the various language-games in the complexity of language, or classify words, concepts, sentences and phrases in speech-activity, or differentiate between linguistic and non-linguistic practices, i.e. between a language and a non-language game.

Many of these demands would be removed if one were to consider his work, not as a blueprint for philosophical (or theological) redemption but as a technique for examining the uses of words. He therefore in his exposition must be selective; such as the building-slab example which is rather stereotyped and even mechanical. But to give an exhaustive theory, is for his methodology impossible because what is applicable in one instance of 'use' may not be elsewhere. His technique is therefore descriptively open.

This is the position of James Bogen.

" . . . I think it incorrect to say that Wittgenstein wanted to provide a single positive theory of language use. It is not surprising that the doctrines he presents which centre on the idea that language is part of our natural history are too general and ill-defined to comprise a specific theory of use. They are more satisfactory if treated as guides to the philosophical study of use . . . Wittgenstein's own therapeutic interests make it understandable why he himself did not attempt to provide a detailed theory. He saw his task as 'assembling reminders' to aid philosophers who are perplexed about particular features of language use (Philosophical Investigations 123-127).

To accomplish this he needed to describe specific aspects of language use and to tell philosophers how they had been mistaken in their understanding of them. This kind of work requires the methodology provided by Wittgenstein's remarks about natural history, the technique of using language-games as models, etc. It is not clear that it also requires the development of a full-blown theory or definition of language use."<sup>1</sup>

This thesis, therefore, will be an experiment to determine the value and validity of Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations, as has been interpreted above, for philosophical theory with special reference to theological disagreement.

The theological issue to be discussed is that of 'Infallibility' as ascribed to the Holy Scriptures in American Presbyterianism in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Our concern centres on two men, B.B. Warfield and Charles Briggs. We will demonstrate that both men described the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be 'infallible'. It was however the meaning of the term 'infallible' which brought conflict between them and caused Charles Briggs to be charged with heterodoxy and to be removed from his office in the American Presbyterian Church. The meaning of this word has been and still is a cause of theological disagreement.

The method, in broad outline, will be to clarify this issue by descriptively analysing the use of the concept 'infallible' in the writings of Warfield and Briggs. The 'Semantic', the 'Speech-act', and 'Speech-activity' usage of the term, will be considered respectively. The possible reasons for disagreement will be at the forefront.

---

1. Bogen, op.cit., pp.213-214.



## CHAPTER II.

### BIOGRAPHY

Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield was born at 'Grasmere' near Lexington, Kentucky, on 5th November, 1851. He was reared in a home where the piety and rigour of Calvinistic Christianity was pervasive. He memorised the 'Shorter Catechism' as a child. His knowledge of Holy Scripture would have been extensive as a teenager. After attending private schools in Lexington, he graduated from the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) with distinction at the age of 19. He had a forte for travel and soon embarked to study in Europe, in Edinburgh and Heidelberg. While in Heidelberg he sensed a call to the Christian ministry and returned to enter Princeton Seminary in 1873, graduating in 1876. Again he went to Europe to Leipzig, this time with his new wife. During a severe thunderstorm, his bride experienced such trauma that she never fully recovered and required the constant and loving attention of her husband until her death.

Warfield's gifts were soon recognised and he was offered posts, first in the Old Testament department, then in the New in Western Theological Seminary, Allegheny, Pennsylvania. In 1887 he accepted an invitation to succeed A.A. Hodge as Charles Hodge Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology. It was while at Princeton, that B.B. Warfield's exceptional talents of writing and scholarship reached their fullest expression.

According to Francis Patton

"He was pre-eminently a scholar and lived among his books."<sup>1</sup>

The breadth of his reading and the exactness of his scholarship meant that he was at home in almost any of the departments of Theology.

---

1. 'Princeton Theological Review' XIX (July 1921), p.369



" . . . Warfield made the whole field of Theology - exegetical, historical, doctrinal, polemical and apologetical - the object of thorough-going study. It is safe to say that he was qualified to occupy with rare distinction any of the principal chairs of theological instruction, so that he was one of the few professors who, no matter what the question put to him might be, rarely, if ever, needed to side-step it by saying that it did not belong to his department."<sup>1</sup>

Throughout his life Warfield therefore addressed himself to many diverse themes, from Calvin to Christology, from Perfectionism to Plenary Inspiration. It was, however, in two closely inter-related subjects that Warfield's contribution to late 19th and early 20th century American Presbyterian Theology can be seen. They are his exposition and defense of the 'Reformed Faith' as developed from Augustine through Calvin, the Westminster Divines and the Princeton Tradition and his view as part of that exposition of the doctrine of Holy Scripture.

Throughout his writings Warfield continually ascribes the appellation 'infallible' to Holy Scripture. We are seeking to determine what he means by this term.

To understand the meaning of the word 'infallible' and its cognates within Warfield's writings, it is necessary for us to understand the 'activity' which is taking place to which certain 'language-games' are related. The analysis will be divided into 5 areas.

1. Warfield's view of knowledge and authority
2. Warfield's statement of the doctrine of Biblical infallibility through his Apologetic method and his Exegesis
3. Infallibility and the Phenomena of Scripture

---

1. S.G. Craig, 'B.B. Warfield Introduction to Biblical and Theological Studies, p.XVIII.

4. Infallibility and a scientific approach to Scripture
5. Infallibility and Warfield's Exegetical Method.

# I. WARFIELD'S VIEW OF KNOWLEDGE AND AUTHORITY

The foundations for Warfield's understanding of Knowledge and with it his view of Biblical Authority are established in his exposition of 'Augustine's Doctrine of Knowledge and Authority'.

Warfield sees Augustine as the transition between Plato and Plotinus on the one hand and the emergence of Descartes and Modern Philosophy on the other.

"It was with him that the immediate assurance of consciousness first took its place as the source and warrant of Truth."<sup>1</sup>

Men are therefore encouraged to look within for the home of truth. Like Descartes the problem was certitude. Unlike the academics who are sceptics, Augustine affirmed mathematical certainty and sought to apply this signum mechanically to every sphere. Warfield comments that he needed to learn that apodeictic assurance provides a basis for valid assurance with respect to Empirical Knowledge.

". . . on the basis of this signum we may obtain in every sphere at least the verisimile, the probabile - a sufficient approach to truth to serve all practical purposes, or rather truth itself though not truth in its purity, free from all admixture of error."<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. Augustine's doctrine of Knowledge and Authority. Princeton Theological Review, V, 1907, in Studies in Tertullian and Augustine. O.J.P., 1930, p.135.
  2. Ibid., p.137.



Real and clear, if somewhat roughly measured knowledge is therefore attainable in all departments of investigation. Warfield agrees with Augustine when he writes.

"The possession of a criterion gives validity to the verisimile; for who can declare that anything is like the truth unless he has the truth itself in mind which to compare it and by which to judge it?"<sup>1</sup>

This verum is the possession of every man instinctively in his knowledge e.g. of the law of non-contradiction which he accepts as true independent of his thinking mind.

"The mind, therefore, knows the laws of the true, the beautiful and the good by which it judges observations and experiences of life."<sup>2</sup>

Augustine finds truth in the inner consciousness rather than in sensation.

"In other words, Augustine came forward as a flaming Rationalist in the philosophical sense of that term . . . 'reason' acting under laws of its own, which supplies the forms of thought without no knowledge can be obtained either by sensation or by experience."<sup>3</sup>

Augustine was not an idealist, he recognised the objectivity of the world of sense and the intelligible world. He perceived the human soul as functioning in the double environment of sense perception and intellection. These

---

1. Ibid., p.137.

2. Ibid., p.139.

3. Ibid., p.140.



two modes of knowledge are inter-related, for the sensible cannot be perceived except through the angle of the intelligible world, for only thus can the sensible world be understood.

It is from this point that one can see how Augustine, through Warfield, combines his Christian doctrine of God with his epistemology into what Warfield calls 'Theistic Intuitionism'. The ideas of the intelligible world are innate and belong to man's being from the beginning of his being, but they have not been impressed upon the mind as in Deism, so that by an act of intellection we become aware of those principles which are a part of our structure. Augustine is a Theist. The soul is continually dependent upon God therefore the ideas are continually impressed upon it by God.

"Thus its light is God alone, and the soul, in intellection, bears the same constant relation to God the illuminator as in Ethical action it bears to God the sanctifier."<sup>1</sup>

Innate ideas therefore are the immediate product, as the soul, of God the illuminator, always present with the soul as its sole and indispensable light, in which alone it perceives truth.<sup>2</sup>

Warfield outlines the distinctively Christian Theistic nature of Augustine's view because of the latter's tendency to use the language of the stoics and Neo-platonists. He sets his position over and against the ontologism of Malebranche and Bossuet who teach that we

---

1. Ibid., p.143.

2. Ibid., p.144.

- o contemplate immediately the Divine Being and in him the intelligible world. Warfield agrees that it is nearer his meaning to say that we see God in the external truths which by our sensus intimus we contemplate, than that we see them in him.

- o God is known in <sup>the</sup> intelligible world directly through the intellect. But God is not identified with the intelligible world, as it appears in the soul of man, except as its immediate author. He is in the soul of man not substantialiter but only effective.<sup>1</sup>

"The soul is therefore in unbroken communication with God, and in the body of intelligible truths reflected into it from God, sees God . . . It is only in the light of God, the sun of the soul, that the soul is illuminated to see light."<sup>2</sup>

- | For Augustine, therefore, the condition of all knowledge is revelation. All understanding from within or without is via God.

"No where does he permit the reader to suppose either that God in his substance invades the soul, or that the soul sees in God the ideas which constitute the intelligible world; although he insists steadily that these ideas are the ideas that are in God and that he who sees them, therefore, so far sees God - but in a glass darkly."<sup>3</sup>

God in his revelation now becomes the surety for the validity of our knowledge.

However, in the acquiring of the knowledge the human mind is not passive but active. This means the purity

---

1. Ibid., p.144.

2. Ibid., pp.145-146.

3. Ibid., p.148.

of one's knowledge is related to the purity of one's soul . The ideas of God will be eternal and unchanging but our conception and perception will be dependent upon the state of the soul. For Augustine there was a scale of knowledge and of truth and as one rose in the scale so the embracing of the truth became more difficult and the preparation of the soul more arduous. In the knowledge of God, Augustine's rationalism is most evident where he argues for the purging of the soul through emancipation from the senses.

Corollaries of his intuitionism are:

- (1) The finitude of the human soul which means we cannot hope to attain absolutely perfect knowledge;
- (2) The development of man's soul which means his knowledge will only be by slow process and from without;
- (3) The sinfulness of the human soul which acts as a clog upon it in its aspiration to knowledge.

The immaturity and finitude of man's soul results in his knowledge always being shrouded in mystery. This mystery:

" . . . not only surrounds the circle of knowledge illuminated by its intelligence, with a vast realm of impenetrable darkness; mystery equally underlies all that it knows as an unfathomable abyss which it cannot plumb."<sup>1</sup>

When this is applied to God:

"no knowledge can be had of him beyond the knowledge of how ignorant we are of him."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.153.

2. Ibid., p.153.



In his ignorance man needs help. This comes when we accept by faith, knowledge, on the authority of others. Such faith would be reasonable in that it will be accorded only to an authority which commends itself to reason. If, however, one adds to the finitude and immaturity of man, his sin:

"no merely incomplete, or as yet incompleting, knowledge accordingly results; but just no knowledge at all, or even anti-knowledge, positive error, vanity and lies, and thus a condition is created which assuredly calls not for humility and patience, but for despair."<sup>1</sup>

Their desperate need is for a divine revelation to neutralise the noetic effects of sin and divine grace to remove the sin. Warfield does not see this as a mechanical intrusion of an alien idea into Augustine's general conception

"It rather stands in the most direct analogy alike with his whole conception of man's relation to God and with his particular view of man's natural needs and the natural provision for their satisfaction."<sup>2</sup>

Even without sin, man needed God for knowledge; now the revelation is narrower and made more objective. Just as authority was needed as a remedy for the ineffectiveness of reason so revelation plays the same role for the mind darkened by sin.

"The heavenly Father intervenes to meet the needs of sin-blinded souls by offering to their faith, on the authority of God, the truth which they are as sinners incapable of ascertaining for themselves."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Ibid., p.156.
  2. Ibid., p.158.
  3. Ibid., p.168.

Adolph Harnack and most Roman Catholic apologists have contended that Augustine, because of gnawing doubts, at this point throws himself upon the authority of the Church. Warfield rejects this and argues that although Augustine questioned the validity of unaided reason, he did not commit rational suicide. Rather he sought truth through authority because this was for him the rational road to truth. Warfield therefore interprets Augustine as holding to the necessity of vindicating the rationality of an authority before faith. As we need truth to see truth, and wisdom to see wisdom, so we need revelation:

"For revelation is a thing which can be validated by appropriate evidence even to those who have not yet attained wisdom; and which, when once trusted on its appropriate grounds, gradually leads us into that wisdom which before was unattainable."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield describes Augustine's view of faith and reason as coadjutants with a common end, i.e. knowledge. Faith, in a sense, preceded reason, e.g. our grounds for the acceptance of the revelation may be weak as perhaps were Augustine's, but if God has given us a revelation, then we must believe, even if we cannot comprehend it. Reason, in a sense, precedes faith, for our intellects will not comprehend the contents of the revelation, nor will we justify them to ourselves, without the use of our reason.

Warfield draws these strands together as an avenue into stating Augustine's view of Biblical Authority.

---

1. Ibid., p.168.

" . . . with Augustine the idea of authority coalesces with that of revelation, the idea of revelation with that of apostolicity, and the idea of apostolicity with that of scripture."<sup>1</sup>

Briefly stated, the Scriptures are authoritative because they are imposed upon the Church by the Apostles who are the accredited messengers of Christ who is the Incarnate Word of God. The Canonical Scriptures as the inspired Word of God are to be received as the embodiment of the Revelation of God. Methodologically the question is how does one assure oneself of the Scripture apostolicity? Either Augustine was a forerunner of what Warfield calls 'the Protestant Doctrine' and marshalled appropriate historical evidence, or he followed 'the Romish Principle', declined all argument and rested on the enactments of the Church. Warfield contends that since apostolicity is an historical conception, it ought to be established on historical evidence; he therefore surmises that Augustine, who is weak at this point, in his appeal to church and tradition might have been appealing to historical testimony of the church.

Finally he summarises Augustine's view of knowledge and authority.

"Augustine's whole doctrine thus becomes a unit. Man is to find truth within himself because there God speaks to him. All knowledge rests, therefore, on a revelation of God; God impressing on the soul continually the ideas which form the intellectual world. These ideas are taken up, however, by man in perception and conception, only so far as each is able to do so: and man being a sinner is incapacitated for their reception and

---

1. Ibid., p.223.



retention. This sinful incapacity is met in the goodness of God by revelation and grace, the sphere of both of which is the Church. The Church, therefore, set over against the world as the new Kingdom of God in which sinful man finds restoration and in its gradual growth we observe the human race attaining its originally destined end. The time is to come when the Kingdom of God shall have overspread the earth, and when that time comes, the abnormalities having been cured, the normal knowledge of God will assert itself throughout the redeemed race of men. Here in a single paraphrase is Augustine's whole doctrine of Knowledge and Authority."<sup>1</sup>

Although Warfield would seek to be unashamedly Augustinian, it would be unfair to attribute to the commentator all the views of his subject. Nevertheless, this paper of Warfield's is invaluable to us for three reasons:

1. Warfield explicitly states his own views. These will be incorporated later.
2. He demonstrates through exposition how he perceives the pattern of relations between the processes of knowledge and one's affirmation of Biblical Authority within Theology.
3. It highlights those factors which Warfield continually expanded upon in his Theology with relation to his understanding of the infallibility of Holy Scripture.

---

1. Ibid., p.205

Warfield is not a philosopher. He does not develop in his writings a self-consciously consistent epistemology. The influence of the Scottish Realist Philosophy is nevertheless unquestionable for the following three reasons:

1. He was part of the Princeton tradition which had imbibed the tenets of this perspective.

The first President of Princeton was John Witherspoon, a Scot, and an adherent of that orthodox branch of Realism which sought to use their insights to combat Deism. Harold Stenson describes Witherspoon as the Scottish Philosophy's first real ambassador.<sup>1</sup> Witherspoon's impact was effective.

"As a result of Witherspoon's powerful influence, Reid did supplant Berkeley at Princeton, and due to the powerful advocacy of Archibald Alexander, the first, and for a year, the only Professor in the Princeton Theological Seminary, and Charles Hodge, his great colleague and successor, the Scottish Philosophy was carried by Princeton graduates to academics, colleges, seminaries and churches all over the country."<sup>2</sup>

James McCosh, whose major work was on the 'Scottish Philosophy' came to Princeton University to be one of its most illustrious Presidents the same year Warfield began his studies. McCosh reinforced the Witherspoon tradition.

- 
1. Stenson, Harold Sten. A History of Scottish Empiricism from 1730-1856, Ph.D. Diss.(unpub.), Columbia U. 1952, p.260.
  2. Ibid., p.262.

It was in such an ethos that Warfield first learnt his theology and was later to teach the same.

2. Warfield's teacher, mentor and predecessor was Charles Hodge. Warfield, in spite of his voluminous writings, did not produce a Systematic Theology, but leaned upon the three volume systematic work of his Master, Hodge. It was Hodge's work he used as a text book in the classroom.

" . . . he felt that Hodge's Systematic Theology rightly held the field and needed no replacing."<sup>1</sup>

As already intimated, Hodge had imbibed the principles of this philosophical movement.

"Archibald Alexander's 'Outlines of Moral Science' which Hodge, in lieu of any work on the subject by himself, considered to be the epitoms of correct ethical reasoning. Any reader unaware that its author was one of the nation's most inflexible champions of Old School Calvinism would assume on reading this book by itself, that it was written, perhaps, by some wild English latitudinarian bent on mediating the views of Butler, Reid and Price."<sup>2</sup>

This is seen clearly in Hodge's Systematic Theology.

"Hodge himself is caught up in the anthropocentrism of Scottish Philosophy. Safe in Ehrenbrentstein as he was, he did not at first try to establish a rationalized mediate position between divine sovereignty and human freedom as New England Theologians had done. This double truth was to him a sacred mystery. But later his confidence in 'philosophical speculation' seems to have grown. . ."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Grier, op.cit., p.7.

2. Stenson, op.cit., p.266.

3. Stenson, op.cit., p.266.



The full agency of man as perceived by Hodge is not that of contingency, i.e. the power of contrary choice. He rejects that the will of man is acting out of <sup>te</sup> deterministic necessity. He contends that a free act may be mentally certain.

"Certainty is separated by an equal distance from the doctrine of necessity on the one hand, and from that of contingency on the other. It teaches that a man is free not only when his outward acts are determined by his will, but when his volitions are truly and properly his own, determined by nothing out of himself but proceeding from his own views, feelings and innermost dispositions, so that they are the real, intelligent, and conscious expression of his character, or of what is in his mind."<sup>1</sup>

According to Stenson at this point

"The foundation of his ethic and his conception of natural theology, moreover, are Scottish rather than Calvinistic."<sup>2</sup>

Many other such illustrations could be given from Hodge's work, not least in his understanding of the place of reason.

". . . we find that Hodge's epistemology<sup>s</sup> is based on the presupposition of the sufficiency of the enlightened reason. By means of his reason man is able to receive the revelation of God, which is conceived as a communication of truth."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Hodge, C., Systematic Theology, Vol.11, (James Clarke & Co. Ltd.), London, 1960, p.285.
  2. Stenson, op.cit., p.266.
  3. Livingstone, W.D., The Princeton Apologetic as exemplified by the work of B.B. Warfield and J.G. Machen. A Study of American Theology (1880-1930), Unpub. Diss. Yale University, 1948.

3. Warfield was familiar with the writings of the Scottish School. This is evident explicitly when in 'On Faith in its Psychological Aspects' he quotes 'Sir William Hamilton' and 'The Works of Thomas Reid'.<sup>1</sup>

His implicit dependence upon them will be seen as we highlight the aspects of his thought influenced by this Movement. Before doing so, we shall look more closely at 'The Scottish Philosophy'.

The Scottish Philosophy was a product of the Scottish Renaissance of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries which placed the Scottish Universities in the European forefront.<sup>2</sup>

It has its roots in Aristotle via St. Thomas Aquinas and the Sons of the Reformation who were Thomistic like Thomas Hooker. John Locke was their great mentor<sup>3</sup> and they found motivation in the experimental approach of Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton. The reflective empiricism of the Cambridge Platonists like Bishop Butler must have had some influence.

Sir William Hamilton described Gersham Carmichael, the regent of St. Andrews and the teacher of Francis Hutcheson, the founder of the movement.<sup>4</sup>

But according to Stenson, it was Francis Hutcheson and Thomas Reid who carried the work to completion,

1. Op.cit., p.387.

2. Ahlstrom, S.E., Scottish Philosophy and American Theology Church History, Vol.24, 1955, p.258.

3. "The Scottish Metaphysicians largely imbibed the spirit of Locke, all of them speak of him with profound respect . . ." James McCosh, Scottish Philosophy, New York, Robert Carter & Bros., 1875, p.28.

4. Quoted by McCosh, Ibid., p.36.



Dugald Stewart who was its salesman to the world, and Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson who made the chief contributions to the other fields.<sup>1</sup>

"What we have, nevertheless, is a broad and diversified movement of moderate philosophy challenging the old Calvinistic tradition in both the established church and in the universities."<sup>2</sup>

Sydney Ahlstrom sees their influence as more radical than this, citing the influence of Deism and Science in the Church, the struggles between the Evangelicals and the Moderates for university appointments, and the heresy trials of John Simpson, Hutcheson's predecessor in Glasgow. He concludes:

". . . it is more accurate to see the Scottish philosophers as a liberal vanguard, even as theological revolutionaries, than to preserve the traditional picture of genteel conservatives bringing reason to the service of a decadent orthodoxy."<sup>3</sup>

James McCosh, one of their descendants, but within the Evangelical camp sees them, if not genteel, certainly conservative.

"The Scottish metaphysicians, with the exception of Chalmers, have never identified themselves very deeply with the more earnest spiritual life of the country; but they defended the fundamental truths of natural religion, and they even spoke respectfully of the Bible."<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. Stenson, op.cit., p.259.
  2. Stenson, op.cit., p.260.
  3. Ahlstrom, op.cit., p.295.
  4. McCosh, op.cit., p.21.



This attitude of cautious approbation is what caused the orthodox theologians, as in the Princeton School, to defend their position against Deism and Scepticism "with weapons forged in Scottish Universities."<sup>1</sup>

Three aspects of their philosophy, which became an integral part of Nineteenth Century Princeton theology, are present in Warfield and are pillars in the framework of thought in relation to his statements on biblical infallibility.

1. Intuitionism
2. The Empirical Method
3. The Status of Reason and the Understanding

#### 1. INTUITIONISM

"The broadest definition of the term 'intuition' is immediate apprehension."<sup>2</sup>

James McCosh considers this one of three essential principles of the Scottish Philosophy.

"By the observation of consciousness, principles are reached which are prior to and independent of experience. This is another grand characteristic of the school, distinguishing it, on the one hand, from Empiricism and sensationalism; and, on the other hand from the dogmatism and apriori speculation of all ages and countries. It agrees with the former in holding that we can construct a science of mind only by observation, and out of the facts of experience; but then it separates

1. Ahlstrom, op.cit., p.262.

2. McCosh, op.cit., p.5.

from them, inasmuch as it resolutely maintains that we can discover principles which are not the product of observation and experience, and which are in the very constitution of the mind, and have there the sanction of the author of our nature."<sup>1</sup>

These intuitions, Hutcheson calls 'senses', Reid 'principles of common sense', Dugald Stewart 'fundamental laws of human thought and belief', and William Hamilton (from Kant) 'apriori forms or conditions'.<sup>2</sup>

Such perceptions were soon woven into the apologetic garments of the orthodox Scots, much to the displeasure of H.S. Stenson.

". . . among those writers who were anxious to establish certain 'truths' of the Scottish Presbyterian religion - the method of introspection is misused to prove any precious dogma 'intuitively'. In the name of 'Scottish Philosophy', many lesser writers - champions of dogma - normally align themselves with the introspective method of the more radical Scottish Empiricists . . . These lesser lights appeal to introspection in a rationalistic manner. The 'truths' they claim to find are 'first truths', 'self-evident truths', 'intuited truths' - orthodoxy's old stand-bys, all with a sacrosanct capital 'T'.<sup>3</sup>

"In the service of orthodox Presbyterianism, common sense is converted into intuition of supernatural and absolute truth . . .

---

1. McCosh, Ibid., p.6.

2. Ibid., p.6.

3. Stenson, Harold Sten, A History of Scottish Empiricism from 1730-1858, Ph.D. Dissertation (unpublished) Columba University, 1952, pp.93-94.

a mere sensation in itself - is changed by those who wish to defend religion from the vantage of irrefragable truth, to a rationalistic intuition of a trans-empirical truth."<sup>1</sup>

How does Warfield utilise intuitionism?

As we have already observed, it is in Augustine's doctrine of 'Knowledge and Authority' that Warfield speaks of intuitionism. He approves of Augustine's 'introspection' and his recognition of the two modes of knowledge 'sense perception' and the 'senses notium'. The external sense is dependent upon the intellect.

"... the mind unavoidably knows, therefore, the laws of the lovely, the beautiful and the good, according to which, as its criterion, it judges all the true, beautiful and good which is brought into observation in the experience of life."<sup>2</sup>

These truths we know intuitively "quite independently of our thinking minds."<sup>3</sup> They are 'innate ideas'.

"... they inhere in his nature as such, and are not impressed on him by external nature; and they are innate in the sense that they belong to his nature from the beginning of his being."<sup>4</sup>

The theistic form of such intuitionism indicates how such apprehension relates to the knowledge of God. These 'innate ideas', which are intuitively apprehended,

---

1. Ibid., pp.244-245.

2. Op.cit., p.390.

3. Op.cit., p.390.

4. Op.cit., p.395.



are being continually impressed on the soul by God. God is therefore the light of knowledge in intellection. As we contemplate upon these eternal truths through our sensus intimus we see God. God is therefore known in the intelligible world through the intellect.

"The soul is therefore in unbroken communication with God, and in the body of intelligible truths reflected into it from God, sees God."<sup>1</sup>

"God's existence, therefore, becomes to the soul as intuitively certain as is its own."<sup>2</sup>

John Calvin in his Institutes begins at this point. In Warfield's paper on Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God, he expounds approvingly the thesis of his mentor.

"That the knowledge of God is innate, naturally engraved on the hearts of men, and so a part of their very constitution as men, that it is a matter of instinct, and every man is self taught it from his birth, Calvin is thoroughly assured."<sup>3</sup>

"Since such knowledge is divinely impressed upon the soul of man, for Calvin, like Augustine, the proper concern of mankind is the knowledge of God and the soul."<sup>4</sup>

Calvin expresses his thesis as that the knowledge of God and the knowledge of self are given in the same act. Warfield expounds it thus:

- 
1. Ibid., p.145.
  2. Ibid., p.148.
  3. Warfield, B.B., Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God, Princeton Theo. Review VII, 1909, pp.219-325. Reprinted in Calvin and Augustine (P & R), p.33.
  4. Ibid., p.35.



"For when we know self, we must know it as it is: and that means we must know it as dependent, derived, imperfect, and responsible being. To know self implies, therefore, the co-knowledge with self of that on which it is dependent, from which it derives, by the standard of which its imperfection is revealed, to which it is responsible . . . .  
Meanwhile, it is clear that man has an instinctive and ineradicable knowledge of God, which, moreover, must produce appropriate reactions in his thought, feeling and will, whence arises what we call religion."<sup>1</sup>

Again he says:

"The knowledge of God with which we are natively endowed is therefore more than a bare conviction that God is: it involves, more or less explicated, some understanding of what God is. Such a Knowledge of God can never be otiose or inert; but must produce an effect in human souls, in the way of thinking, feeling, willing. In other words, our native endowment is not merely a sensus deitatis, but a semen religionis. For what we call religion is just the reaction of the human soul to what it perceives God to be."<sup>2</sup>

From this intuitionism four inferences can be drawn: First, Warfield's intuitionism is not 'purely' of Scottish descent but is as much dependent on Augustine, the precursor of Western rationalism, and Calvin, whose interests, like Warfield's, were theologic rather than philosophic.

Secondly, the primacy of the intellect (sensus intimus) for the perception of truth, inclusive of the knowledge of God, is evident.

---

1. Ibid., p.31.

2. Ibid., p.37.



Third, as is argued by C.N. Kraus, for Warfield:

" . . . all our knowledge is of one kind, and that God is an object of rational perception in the same manner as are natural phenomena."<sup>1</sup>

Fourth, if, as Warfield contends from Calvin, the intuitive knowledge of God must create a religious response, then such a knowledge via the intellect as an object of rational perception, can never be abstract. Warfield, therefore, does not dichotomise theoretic and religious knowledge.

## 2. THE EMPIRICAL METHOD

According to James McCosh, the Empirical Method is the first principle of the Scottish Philosophy.

"It proceeds on the method of observation, professedly and really . . . To the Scottish School belongs the merit of being the first, avowedly and knowingly, to follow the inductive method, and to employ it systematically in psychological investigations."<sup>2</sup>

Harold Stenson, in fact, calls this movement Scottish Empiricism a title which McCosh would refute.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike the rationalists, therefore, they did not postulate what was rationally necessary in order to

- 
1. Kraus, Clyde Norman, Principle of Authority in the Theology of B.B. Warfield, William Adams Brown, and Gerald Birney Smith, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Duke University, 1961, p.25.
  2. Op.cit., p.3.
  3. Op.cit., p.24.



know, but they claimed that by a 'commonsense' experimental analysis of human nature, it was possible 'to induce' the constitution of human nature including the ones of perception and reality. A first principle, therefore of e.g. Thomas Reid is reliance on sense perception.

John Gerstner places Warfield in this category:

"Although a theologian and not a philosopher, Warfield did not write much about sense experience - and yet it seems to be his epistemological starting point."<sup>1</sup>

The following aspects of Warfield's writings demonstrate his dependence on this Empirical approach.

1. His Interaction with Augustine
2. His Apologetic method re Biblical Authority
3. His Utilisation of Scientific Criticism
4. His View of Faith and History

1. Warfield rebukes Augustine for demanding apodeictic certainty in every sphere of knowledge. He had to learn, says, Warfield, that such signum provides a basis for valid knowledge in the Empirical sphere.

"On the basis of this signum we may obtain in every sphere at least the verisimile, the probabile - a sufficient approach to truth to serve all practical purpose . . . In other words, in every department of investigation there is attainable real and clear, if somewhat roughly measured, knowledge."<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. Gerstner, John H., Warfield's Case for Biblical Inerrancy, in God's Inerrant Word, Minn., Bethany Press, 1973, p.120.
  2. Op.cit., p.389.

Again, Warfield is careful to distinguish Augustine's position from that of the idealists who denied the objectivity of the sensible world. In fact, after quoting Nourrison approvingly in a footnote:

"To affirm the certitude of consciousness is, for him, to affirm in the same act the certitude of the external world . . . It is well to take note of the sagacity with which he distinguishes the phenomenon from the being and thus exonerates the senses from the error which are commonly attributed to them. Orbits and witnesses of what passes, and not of what does not pass, of the phenomenal and not the real, they are not the judges of truth - judicium veritatis non esse in sensibus. It is the intellect that knows or the intellect that deceives itself. Its knowledge is certitude. No one of our day could express it better."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield proceeds to interpret Augustine in the mode of the Scottish Empiricists. There are said to be two objective worlds, the intelligible world and the world of sense. The human soul exists in this double environment and has modes of perception according to the object, i.e. the sensus intimus and external senses.

"Augustine's notion is, essentially, that the soul, by these two modes of contact with its double environment is able to read off the facts of each."<sup>2</sup>

2. This approach practically demonstrated in the Apologetic Method, Warfield developed re. the establishing of his high view of Scripture in a booklet published by his church, "The Divine Origin of the Bible."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Quoted by Warfield, Ibid., p.393.

2. Ibid., p.393.

3. Presbyterian Board of Publication, Phil. PA, 1882, R.I., (Appendix 1), p.429f.



We are asked to consider the question,

"Is there reason to believe that God has been concerned at all in the origin of the Bible?"<sup>1</sup>

He wants the reader to approach this subject without assumptions and with an open mind. The process of reasoning will be an inquiry by induction.

"Our purpose is to look upon the Bible simply as one of the facts of the universe, of which every theory of the universe must take account, and for which, just as surely as for gravitation, it must make account or itself die, and then ask (and press the question): What kind of a cause must be assumed to account for it just as it is and just as it arose in the world?"<sup>2</sup>

Warfield then proceeds to give eighteen 'facts' for our consideration, e.g. facts concerning its external history such as the beneficent influence of the Bible; facts concerning the structure of the Bible, its verity in diversity; facts concerning its teaching and the progressive character of this teaching. Warfield concludes:

"A supernatural origin for the Bible appears cumulatively proven."<sup>3</sup>

Using 'common sense', an open mind and an Empirical Method, Warfield believes one will most likely embrace his thesis than any other.

---

1. Ibid., p.429.

2. Ibid., p.430.

3. Ibid., p.447.



3. In an age of Science, Warfield was not frightened of the critical apparatus. He believed that the right use of the historical-critical method without the anti-supernatural bias of its radical exponents would lead to conclusions which he himself espoused. His 'Introduction to Textual Criticism of the New Testament' was a classic and went through many editions. Leaning heavily on the finding of Westcott and Hort, he pleaded for the full range of the textual critical apparatus to be used.

"The first rule for the application of these methods therefore, is to apply them all. Let no one be slighted, let each be used carefully and independently, and the results obtained by each carefully compared together."<sup>1</sup>

These methods involved a careful sifting of Empirical evidence, both internal, from a consideration of what the author is likely to have written, and external, through a comparison of the various copies. Such an approach will lead us to an 'assured' result.

"When the findings of the various methods agree, the conclusion is certain, and we may feel sure that we have obtained the autographic text."<sup>2</sup>

Warfield was as confident in 'Higher Criticism' re the use of the Empirical Method. In an article on the Canonicity of 2 Peter, he states his approach to such problems.

"The question is, was it always there, or has it been foisted unrighteously into a place to which it has no claim?"

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., "An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament", 6th Ed. Hodder and Stoughton, London, p.183.
  2. Ibid., p.183.

This is a historical question, and is to be settled on appropriate historical evidence."<sup>1</sup>

By examining the historical data, the external and internal evidence, Warfield seeks to demonstrate the early dating of 2 Peter and from that its apostolicity by the use of the historical-critical method.

4. When Warfield turns to defend the cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith - the Resurrection of Christ, he treats it as historical fact which can be demonstrated even while standing upon common ground with the Empirical Sceptic. His starting point are those books of the New Testament that the Sceptic will accept as authentic, namely, Romans, I and II Corinthians and Galatians. From such a foundation he believes it possible to indisputably demonstrate that the resurrection of Christ was universally believed in the Christian Church; that over two hundred and fifty of Christ's followers were eye witnesses of this phenomena; and that the Church believed it owed its life to belief in this dogma. How are we to account for these facts, says Warfield?

"Either the original disciples of Christ were deceivers and deliberately concocted the story of the Resurrection, or they were woefully deluded, or the Resurrection was a fact."<sup>2</sup>

Which of these theses best correspond to what we know? On the basis that there was no expectation of

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., The Canonicity of 2 Peter. Southern Presbyterian Review, Jan. 1882, rep. in S.S.W., II, p.48.
  2. The Resurrection of Christ. A Historical Fact. The Journal of Christian Philosophy III, 1884, in S.S.W. I, p.187.

resurrection and no ground therefore for vision, that there was no time for belief in the resurrection to mythically grow and that the testimony of five hundred are too many visionaries to create, then:

" . . . there seems no other alternative: eye witnesses in abundance witness to the fact; if they were neither deceivers nor deceived, then Christ did rise from the dead."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield would appear to recognise the basic weakness of this Empirical Methodology, for the man of faith. It cannot give one certainty, merely probability.

"On the basis of this signum" (which gives certainty) "we may obtain in every sphere at least the verisimile, the probabile - a sufficient approach to truth to serve all practical purposes. . . ." <sup>2</sup>

However, as D.P. Fuller points out "eternal happiness is not satisfied with high probability."<sup>3</sup> +

The implication of this for Warfield's Doctrine of Biblical Infallibility will become evident.

### 3. THE STATUS OF REASON AND THE UNDERSTANDING

One of the recurring observations of many commentators of the Princeton School is the importance they place on the reasoning faculty and the need for truth to

---

1. Ibid., p.191.

2. Augustine, op.cit., p.137.

3. Fuller, D.P., B.B. Warfield's view of Faith and History, Bulletin of Evangelical Theological Society, XL/2, p.76.



comply with what is reasonable! This had its roots in their apologetic rebuttal of Deism. But as Sandeen observes:

"The Princeton Theologians did not stand equi-distant from them on some neutral epistemological ground, but . . . occupied exactly the same stance as their deist rivals."<sup>1</sup>

Jack Rogers notes the confidence in human reason as a foundational principle of the Scottish Realist School which Princeton imbibed in its conflict with Deism. He quotes from Witherspoon's Inaugural Lecture:

"If the Scripture is true, the discoveries of reason cannot be contrary to it . . . It is true that infidels do commonly proceed upon pretended principles of reason . . . the best way is to meet upon their own ground and show from reason itself the fallacy of their principles."<sup>2</sup>

Warfield sees the Status of Reason as a correlate of his intuitionism and his understanding of the sensible world. The sensible is not independent of the intellect. In fact the former cannot be perceived except through the angle of the intelligible world. Only thus can the sensible world be understood.<sup>3</sup>

This emphasis on the primacy of the intellect is most clearly spelt out in his understanding of the relationship between Faith and Reason.

- 
1. Sandeen, E.R., The Princeton Theology, Church History XXXI, (Sept. 1962), p.309.
  2. Witherspoon, J., Quoted by J. Rogers. Scripture in the Westminster Confession, (Th.D. Diss. Vrije, U. of Amsterdam, J.H. Kok, N.U. Kampen, 1966), p.25.
  3. Augustine 'Doctrine of Kingdom of God', op.cit., p.14.

In an essay on 'Apologetics', Warfield writes:

"It seems to be forgotten that though faith be a moral act and the gift of God, it is yet formally conviction passing into confidence; and that all forms of convictions must rest on evidence as their ground; and it is not faith but reason which investigates the nature and validity of this ground."<sup>1</sup>

This dependence of Faith upon Reason Warfield addresses himself to in 'On Faith in its Psychological Aspects'. After an etymological study of the words 'faith' and 'belief', Warfield states:

"The conception embodied in the terms 'belief', 'faith' in other words is not that of an arbitrary act of the subjects; it is that of a mental state or act which is determined by sufficient reasons."<sup>2</sup>

This understanding of 'faith', 'belief' is crucial for his entire exposition. Faith is not therefore the product of a volition, which represents our desires, but 'belief' is grounded in our findings and more, these findings constrain belief.

"The consent of belief is in its very nature and must always be . . .  
'forced consent'. "<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., Apologetics. 'New Schoff-Herzog Encyl. of Religious Knowledge', edited by S.M. Jackson, reprinted in Studies in Theology, p.15.
  2. Warfield, B.B., 'On Faith in its Psychological Aspects', in Princeton Theol. Review IX, 1911, pp.537-566. (Reprinted in Biblical and Theological Studies, P & R.), p.376.
  3. Ibid., p.379.

"When we say that 'belief', 'faith' is the product of evidence and is in that sense a compelled consent, this is not the same as saying the consent is produced only by compelling evidence, that is, evidence which is objectively adequate. Objective adequacy and subjective effect are not exactly correlated."<sup>1</sup>

The subjective effect of evidence will differ from mind to mind and depending upon their state, i.e. weak evidence may be adequate for one and strong evidence inadequate for another. However, faith is always dependent upon evidence. That is to say:

"'Faith', 'belief' does not follow the evidence itself, in other words, but the judgment of the intellect on the evidence. And the judgment of the intellect naturally will vary endlessly, as intellect differs from intellect or as the states of the same intellect differ from one another."<sup>2</sup>

It is this subjective factor which drives Warfield to consider how the reasoning faculties relate to 'Faith' and 'Knowledge' in the light of Kant's assertion that faith is conviction founded on evidence which is subjectively adequate and that knowledge is conviction founded on evidence which is objectively adequate.<sup>3</sup>

Warfield rejects this Kantian distinction on the basis that it is psychologically impossible.

---

1. Ibid., p.380.

2. Ibid., p.380.

3. Ibid., p.381.



"The mind knows and can know nothing of objectivity and subjectivity adequate grounds in forming its convictions. All it is conscious of is the adequacy or inadequacy of the grounds on which its convictions are based."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield, nevertheless, still seeks to distinguish 'faith' from 'knowledge', but will allow no distinctions that make 'faith' the product of 'subjective interest or consideration of values',<sup>2</sup>

He is willing to accept Alexander Ormond's thesis in Baldwin's 'Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology' that knowledge is a form of conviction which rests on grounds adapted to give 'theoretic certitude'.<sup>3</sup>

This notion of 'theoretic certitude' is not expanded upon. We can infer from his explanation of how he conceives knowledge. In knowledge the proximate ground of our conviction is reason,<sup>4</sup> i.e. immediate perception (physical or mental).<sup>5</sup> We may therefore have 'theoretic certitude' or knowledge when we ourselves perceive via the agency of our own rational faculty.

How then does 'reason' relate to 'faith'? Faith for Warfield is not irrational, nor is it hopeful conjecture.

"We cannot believe, any more than we can know, without adequate grounds; it is not faith but 'credulity' to accord credit to insufficient evidence; and an unreasonable faith is no faith at all."<sup>6</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.382.

2. Ibid., p.385.

3. Ibid., p.386.

4. Ibid., p.388.

5. Ibid., p.390.

6. Ibid., p.388.

The distinguishing feature between 'faith' and 'knowledge' is the element of 'authority' in the former.

"But we are moved to this act of conviction by the evidence of testimony, by the force of authority - and not by the immediate perception of our own rational understanding."<sup>1</sup>

It is at this point that Warfield draws upon the views of the Scottish Realist, Hamilton, and St. Augustine, to demonstrate the interdependence of faith and reason.

"It was fully recognised by Augustine - as by Sir William Hamilton - that an activity of reason underlies all 'faith' and an act of 'faith' underlies all knowledge. 'But reason itself', says Sir William Hamilton, expounding Augustine's dictum, 'must rest at least upon authority; for the original data of reason do not rest on reason, but are necessarily accepted by reason on the authority of what is beyond itself. These data are, therefore, in rigid propriety, Beliefs or Trusts. Thus it is, that in the last resort, we must, perforce, philosophically admit, that belief is the primary condition of reason, and not reason the ultimate ground of belief'. With equal frankness, Augustine allows that reason underlies all acts of faith. That mental act which we call 'faith', he remarks, is one possible only to rational creatures, and, of course, we act as rational beings in performing it; and we never believe anything until we have found it worthy of our belief. As we cannot accord faith, then, without perceiving good grounds for according it, reason as truly underlies faith as faith reason."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.388.

2. Ibid., p.387.

Four things emerge from this:

- (1) Warfield claims that his faith is 'reasonable'.
- (2) His authority which is the proximate ground of faith can be rationally demonstrated to be trustworthy.
- (3) The evidence for faith is external and objective.
- (4) The 'forced consent' of faith to the evidence is not automatic, but is dependent upon the subjective judgment of the intellect, on the evidence, and this varies.

To further elaborate upon Warfield's theological orientation we shall examine more carefully the following:

- A. The Principle of Authority
- B. His Apologetic Method
- C. The Subjective Factors in his Theology
  - (i) Sensus divinitatis or semen religio vis
  - (ii) Effects of sin
  - (iii) Nature of sin
  - (iv) Work of the Holy Spirit
  - (v) Religion and Theology

#### A - AUTHORITY

Although recognising the need for Authority in all of man's convictions, including the grounds for reason itself, Warfield is particularly concerned with the need for Authority in the sphere of Theology. The question of authority was a key issue in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century. In that diverse movement known as Liberalism, the Immanentism of Hegel had pervaded this emerging Continental Theology. God was no longer to be thought of as over and against us, informing us from



without, concerning himself. God was now in us and through us. The experience of men therefore became a ground and norm for theological reflection. In this context, Warfield, a traditional theist, could write bluntly:

"There is nothing more important in the age in which we live than to bear constantly in mind that all the Christianity of Christianity rests precisely on 'external authority'. Religion, of course, we can have without 'external authority', for man is a religious animal and will function religiously always and everywhere. But Christianity, No. Christianity rests on 'external authority' and that for the very good reason that it is not the product of man's religious sentiment but if a gift from God."<sup>1</sup>

Here Warfield is demonstrating the interdependence of the Christianity which he espouses and an 'external authority' which communicates to him as to what he is to believe. For more pragmatic reasons, he pleads the same cause.

"The only propagandism that has ever won a lasting hold upon men has been the bold proclamation of positive, dogmatic truth, based on external, divine authority; and the only power that can resist the infidelity of our day is the power of consistently concatenated dogmatic truth, proclaimed on the authority of a fully trusted, 'Thus saith the Lord'"<sup>2</sup>

It is such an external authority which Warfield identified with 'the Scriptures'.

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., *Mysticism and Christianity*, in *Studies in Theology*, (N.Y. 1932), p.659.
  2. Warfield, B.B., *The latest phase of Historical Rationalism*, (*Presbyterian Quarterly*, IX, 1895, pp.36-67, and 185-210 in *Studies in Theology*), p.586.

## B - WARFIELD'S APOLOGETIC METHOD

Warfield's Apologetic Method is an extension of his conviction that 'the Authority' which is the proximate ground of faith can be rationally justified:

"Faith is the gift of God; but it does not in the least follow that the faith that God gives us is an irrational faith, that is, a faith without grounds in right reason."<sup>1</sup>

What then is the task of Apologetics? Warfield is intolerant of those who would wish to defend only the minimum of Christianity.

"Its function is not to vindicate for us/ least that we can get along with and yet manage to call ourselves Christians; but to validate the Christian 'view of the world', with all that is contained in the Christian 'view of the world' for the science of men."<sup>2</sup>

The truth of Christianity stands as a whole. In the explication of this faith, however, there are three facts which are foundational and must be demonstrated if the Weltanschauung is to stand.

"Theology . . . it must begin by establishing the existence of God, the capacity of the human mind to know him, and the accessibility of knowledge concerning him. In other words, the very idea of theology as

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., Introduction to Francis R. Beattie's Apologetics: on the Rational Vindication of Christianity, Richmond, Va. 1903, reprinted S.S.W, II, p.98.
  2. Ibid., p.104.



the science of God gives these three great topics which must be dealt with in its fundamental department, by which the foundations for the whole structure are laid - God, religion revelation. With these three facts established, a theology as the science of God becomes possible. . ."<sup>1</sup>

W.D. Livingstone extends these three categories of facts to what becomes in practice for Warfield - five, i.e. he adds to God, religion and revelation, Christianity and the Bible. This is in keeping with Warfield's five types of Apologetics. Livingstone demonstrates Warfield's consistency, i.e. before we can draw our Science of Theology from Scripture, we must be assured that there is Knowledge of God in Scripture, and before that, we must be assured that there is Knowledge of God in the world, and before that, we must be assured that Knowledge of God is possible for man in the world, and before that we must be assured that there is a God to know.<sup>2</sup>

Warfield, therefore, has five sub-divisions for Apologetics. There is the Philosophical which is concerned with the problem of Theism and establishment of the Being of God. Secondly, there is the Psychological which focuses on the capacity of the human mind to grasp the reality. Thirdly, the Medium of Communication establishes the reality of supernatural revelation in history. Fourthly, historical apologetics is concerned with the historicity of the Christian faith, and fifthly, Bibliological Apologetics seeks to establish the trustworthiness of the Scriptures.<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., Apologetics, 'New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge', edited by S.M. Jackson, N.Y. 1908, Reprinted in S.T., pp.11-12.
  2. Livingstone, W.D. (The Princeton Apologetic as exemplified by the work of B.B. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen: A Study in American Theology, 1880-1930, unpubl. Ph.D. Thesis, Yale University, 1948).
  3. Apologetics, op.cit., p.13.



Three points emerge from this. First, by placing God, man, history and Bible on the same plane of factuality which can be reasonably demonstrated to be objectively real, he is making no theoretical distinction between religious and philosophical knowledge. This, for Kraus, was part of the Princeton response to what they perceived as the subjectivism and rationalistic unbelief of post Kantian Theology.

"They maintained that all our knowledge is of one kind, and that God is an object of rational perception in the same manner as are natural phenomena. To be sure, the human mind is limited by its own fruititude and by its sinful nature, but in so far as God has manifested himself, his revelation is apprehended by the human reason, and knowledge of Him may be called theoretic or scientific. It is objective truth not subjective value judgment."<sup>1</sup>

Second, Warfield's high doctrine of external Biblical Authority is not defended in isolation from his apology for God, religion and the Christian revelation.

Third, one can summarise his understanding of the task of Apologetics by describing it as fundamental, comprehensive and objective.<sup>2</sup>

#### C - THE SUBJECTIVE FACTORS IN HIS THEOLOGY

Until now the emphasis in our appreciation of Warfield's thought has been upon the objective and the external, but for Warfield 'faith' and 'knowledge' is only possible through subjective consideration.

- 
1. Kraus, C.N., Principle of Authority in the Theology of B.B. Warfield, William Adams Brown and Gerald, Birney Smith, (Duke University, Ph.D., 1961), p.25.
  2. Intro. to Beattie's Apologetics, op.cit., p.105.

Like Augustine, for Warfield "Knowledge is not a function of the intellect merely, but involves the whole man."<sup>1</sup> It follows from this that:

"... the qualification of all knowledge is rooted in the human nature that knows, and the specific state of the human being whose particular knowledge it is."<sup>2</sup>

Similarly with respect to 'faith', the evidence presented will not automatically create a response of 'belief'. In this an extended quotation, Warfield expands on the subjective aspect of faith:

"There are two factors in the production of faith. On the one hand, there is the evidence on the ground of which the faith is yielded. On the other hand, there is the subjective condition by virtue of which the evidence can take effect in the appropriate act of faith. There can be no belief, faith without evidence; it is on evidence that the mental exercise which we call belief, faith rests; and this exercise or state of mind cannot exist apart from its ground in evidence, and capable of receiving, weighing and responding to it. A mathematical demonstration is demonstrative proof of the proposition demonstrated. But even such a demonstration cannot produce conviction in a mind incapable of following the demonstration. Where musical taste is lacking, no evidence which derives its force from consideration of melody can work conviction. No conviction, whether of the order of what we call knowledge or of faith, can be produced by considerations to which the mind to be convinced is inhable.

---

1. Augustine, op.cit., p.402.

2. Ibid., p.402.



Something more, then, is needed to produce belief, faith, besides the evidence which constitutes its ground. The evidence may be objectively sufficient, adequate, overwhelming. The subjective effect of belief, faith is not produced unless this evidence is also adapted to the mind, and to the present state of that mind, which is to be convinced. The mind itself, therefore - and the varying states of the mind - have their parts to play in the production of belief, faith; and the effect which is so designated is not the mechanical result of the adduction of the evidence. No faith without evidence; but not, no evidence without faith. There may stand in the way of the proper and objectively inevitable effect of the evidence, the subjective nature or condition to which the evidence is addressed. This is the ground of responsibility for belief, faith; it is not merely a question of evidence but of subjectivity; and subjectivity is the other name for personality. Our action under evidence is the touchstone by which is determined what we are. If evidence which is objectively adequate is not subjectively adequate the fault is in us. If we are not accessible to moral evidence, then we are either unmoral, or being moral being, immoral. The evidence to which we are accessible is irresistible if adequate, and irresistibility produces belief, faith. And no belief, faith can arise except on the ground of evidence duly apprehended, appreciated, weighed. We may cherish opinions without evidence, or with inadequate evidence, but not possess faith any more than knowledge. All convictions of whatever order are the products of evidence in a mind accessible to the evidence appropriate to the particular convictions."<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Faith in its Psychological Aspects, op.cit., pp.397-398.



The subjective considerations to be considered are:

- (1) The Sensus Divinitatis
- (2) Sin
- (3) The Nature of Faith
- (4) The Work of the Spirit
- (5) Religion and the Study of Theology

(1) The Sensus Divinitatis

Warfield considers the Sensus Divinitatis to be the starting-point of Reformed Theology.<sup>1</sup> The reality does not require the witness or testimony of others and does not fall into the category of 'faith'.<sup>2</sup> It is immediately perceived. Man, as man does not merely have a notion that God is, but there is content to this knowledge. God has made an ineradicable revelation of himself in human nature. However, man in his fallenness is at enmity with God and his religious response is that of craven fear and dread. The normal response of man, if he were not a sinner, would be reverence and love. Such a competent Knowledge of God is now only possible through Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup> It is this innate knowledge, based on the imago dei and the total dependence of man, which Warfield sees in the heart of Religion,<sup>4</sup> that Augustine relates to his overall epistemology. He makes all knowledge dependent upon God and so makes God's existence as intuitively certain to the soul as is its own.<sup>5</sup>

- 
1. Intro. to A. Kuyper's Encyclopaedia of Sacred Theology, 1898, pp.XI-XIX, reprinted in S.W.W.I., p.453.
  2. Mystrum and Christianity, op.cit., p.659.
  3. Calvin's Doctrine of Knowledge of God. op.cit., pp.35-38.
  4. Warfield, B.B., The Present Day Attitude toward Calvinism, Appendix to Calvin and Augustine, p.499.
  5. Augustine's Doctrine of Knowledge of God, op.cit., p.148.

For Warfield, therefore, the objective demonstration of the validity of his 'faith' through rational and empirical means, including his doctrine of Biblical infallibility, is not for him a cold passionless and irreligious activity, but is to be excited by one's religious appetite. For the true knowledge of self, and with it a competent Knowledge of God is only existentially possible when the Gospel of Jesus Christ is embraced by man as that which is 'true' and worthy of our 'faith'. In Warfield's schemata the Scriptures as authoritative, play a crucial role in achieving this purpose.

## (2) Sin

As has already been indicated, for Warfield, the subjective condition of the person confronted with the objective evidence will determine its effectiveness. In Warfield's theology, the sinfulness of man is presented as the primary obstacle to his response of faith, to the rationally demonstrable activity of God. This may be gleaned from his exposition of:

- (i) the effect of sin on Calvin's doctrine of the Knowledge of God.
- (ii) the effect of sin on Augustine's doctrine of the Knowledge of God.
- (iii) his own affirmation of depravity
- (iv) the implications of man's sin for his reasoning process

- (i) In Warfield's treatment of Calvin, the reason for man's incompetent knowledge is his sin

"The explanation is to be found in the corruption of men's hearts by sin, by which not merely are they rendered incapable of reading off the revelation

of God which is displayed in his works and deeds, but their very instinctive Knowledge of God is dulled and almost obliterated."<sup>1</sup>

This degeneration, ignorance and ~~un~~piety is universal. Apart from further divine intervention, man's natural Knowledge of God is bankrupt. This does not mean that God's reality has been extinguished from man's heart. The objective validity of the revelation of God in nature, providence and in the conscience of man is inescapable.

"The sole cause of the failure of the natural revelation is to be found, therefore in the corruption of the human heart."<sup>2</sup>

The Knowledge of God has therefore been wilfully corrupted, due to man's hostility towards the one who has been revealed. To satisfy his religious appetites he must therefore create gods "by the invention of their own presumptuous imaginations."<sup>3</sup> Man's ignorance of God and his unbelief is not because of insufficient light but because of an evil heart. Warfield thus quotes Calvin:

"Whatever deficiency of natural ability prevents us from attaining the pure and clear knowledge of God, yet, since that deficiency arises from our own fault, we are left without any excuse."<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Calvin, op.cit., p.43.

2. Ibid., p.44.

3. Ibid., p.45.

4. Institutes I V:15, Ibid., p.46.



(ii) In his handling of Augustine, Warfield presents the effect of sin on Knowledge in general, remembering that Augustine's epistemology is grounded in the Knowledge of God. After indicating the implications of our finiteness and immaturity for knowledge, in limiting our discernment of the truth, even in what one knows truly and thus making us humble and patient; he speaks of sin:

"Here is a power which acts distinctively upon the soul's native powers of apprehending truth, blinds the eyes of the mind, distorts its vision, fills it with illusions, so that it sees awry; and a power which so far from passing away with time and growth, batters by what it feeds on and increases in its baleful influence until it overwhelms the soul with falsehood. No merely incomplete, or as yet incompleting, knowledge accordingly results; but just no knowledge at all, or even anti-knowledge, positive error, vanity, and lies; and thus a condition is created which assuredly calls not for humility and patience, but for despair."<sup>1</sup>

This exceedingly negative view of man's capacity for knowledge due to sin has led many to accuse Augustine of scepticism. Warfield recognises that Augustine is arguing for the depravity of man with noetic as well as thelematic and ethical effects which highlights the total hopelessness of man epistemologically, but contrary to opinion of the sceptic, such a condition is abnormal for man who has been created to know truly, if finitely. Augustine, in the eyes of Warfield, does not present the depravity of man apart from the remedy for this disease which is Divine revelation to neutralise the noetic effects of sin and divine grace to remove sin itself.

---

1. Augustine, Ibid., pp.407-408.

(iii) In two short articles, 'Repentance and Original Sin' and 'Inability and the Demand of Faith', Warfield shows himself to be an heir of the classical Calvinist doctrine of total depravity. In the former, the Spirit of God is said to bring a man to "both abhor and condemn himself for the depravity that dwells within him."<sup>1</sup> In the latter, this depravity makes one unable to respond in faith to the overwhelming evidence to believe.

"The command to believe is explicit. And the faith is most winningly presented to the mind and heart. Our obvious duty is to believe: and if we do not do so the responsibility rests upon us. That we cannot do so is the result and index of our sinfulness. Inability is a sinful condition of the will, and the sole reason why a man cannot believe is that he is so exceedingly sinful that such a one as he cannot use his will for believing. He cannot will to do it because he loves sin too much."<sup>2</sup>

(iv) It is however in setting his own position over and against a fellow Augustinian and Calvinist, Abraham Kuyper, that Warfield briefly states the implications of sin and in particular its noetic effect. Kuyper's attitude was to minimise the value of apologetics because of his contention that there are 'two kinds of science',

". . . that which is the product of the thought of sinful man in his state of nature, and that which is the product of man under the influence of the regenerating grace of God."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., Repentance and Original Sin, Union Seminary Mag. X, 1899, reprinted in S.W.I, p.279.
  2. Warfield, B.B. Inability and the Demand of Faith. The Presbyterian Messenger, Nov.15, 1893, reprinted in S.S.W.II, p.725.
  3. Warfield, B.B. Intro to Beattie's Apolog, op.cit., p.100.



the implication of which is that the unbeliever and believer do not stand upon an epistemological ground of agreement. The sin of man is so radical that, in principle, the believer cannot know and reason and apprehend ought apart from the regenerating Grace of God.<sup>1</sup>

For Warfield two kinds of science envisaged by Kuyper are "too absolute".<sup>2</sup> He does not accept that there is a difference in kind in the scientific activities of abnormal sinful man and those of the palingenesis. The only distinction he will make is that of "perfection of performance."<sup>3</sup> He recognises the total depravity of all of man's faculties but does not accept that sin has destroyed or altered their essential nature.<sup>4</sup> All men therefore, whether of the palingenesis or not, are engaged in one 'science'.

"Really there is but one 'science' the subject of which is the human spirit, and the object of all that is."<sup>5</sup>

This 'science' is of necessity possible for the sinner, otherwise even the sinner, who is of the palingenesis, could not know. As it is, those of the palingenesis merely contribute to the one science of sinful humanity.

"Men of all sorts and of all grades work side by side at the common task, and the common edifice grows under their hands into ever fuller and truer outlines."<sup>6</sup>

- 
1. cf. Kuyper's Principles of Sacred Theology
  2. Intro to Beattie, op.cit., p.100
  3. Ibid., p.101.
  4. Ibid., p.100.
  5. Ibid., p.101.
  6. Ibid., p.102.



One might ask - what then is the effect of sin on man's knowledge? Unlike Augustine, there is no talk here of man's mind being distorted and blinded and deluded through sin.

"Sinful and sinless men are, after all, both men; and being both men, are fundamentally alike and know fundamentally alike."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield does not deny that sin has a corrupting effect on our reasoning ability. But it is not so radical that man cannot reason correctly apart from the Grace of God. Otherwise Kuyper's contention would be valid; that an Apologetic discourse on the basis of objective evidence to the reason of unregenerate man would be pointless. Warfield prefers to speak of sin weakening and making unclean the sinner's perception of truth. Palingenesis reverses this process so that within the same scientific activity a different edifice of truth may be erected in which the deflections introduced by sin can be corrected. The degree of success will be determined by two factors, first the rank of the science engaged in (Warfield is here functioning with a hierarchial view of Science with Theology as Queen) and second, the intensive and extensive effect of regeneration.

At the top échelon of the Sciences - Theology and in particular, the branch of Apologetics

"we see the palingenesis at work on the science of man at its highest point."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.101.

2. Ibid., p.103.

Here, the reversal of the effects of sin are such, that the regenerate can be said to be a 'man of stronger and purer thought'. This purifying of his thought does not separate him from rational discourse with the impure. The Christian may still objectively and validly in the form of pure reason<sup>1</sup> make access into the minds of sinful men.

"All minds are of the same essential structure; and the less illuminated will not be able permanently to resist or gainsay the determinations of the more illuminated."<sup>2</sup>

The effect of sin therefore upon Warfield's epistemology is stated imprecisely. If, as he contends, depravity is total and that the depraved man does not think as he ought, then this must surely effect the reasoning process. On the other hand, as pointed out by Gerstner:

"Still, corrupted or not, the reason must and can investigate the 'nature and validity' of the 'ground'."<sup>3</sup>

One could summarise Warfield's position thus: Sinful man will develop his science as part of his humanity, self consciously, in his fallenness, suppressing and distorting those evidences and facts which would lead to his knowledge of God and therefore of his own wilful sin. He can be presented with 'the reasons for faith' which he may not be able to refute, but he will not believe and respond in faith. The subjective nature or condition to which the evidence is addressed must be changed. This is the work of regeneration. It does not change the objective validity of 'the grounds of faith' but the

---

1. Ibid., p.103.

2. Ibid., p.103.

3. Gerstner, op.cit., p.124.



subjective ability of man to embrace such grounds and so be constrained to believe. Sin, which is in antithesis to faith in God must be therefore subjectively dealt with in order for faith to emerge.

### (3) The Nature of Faith

We have already considered Warfield's understanding of the objective quality of faith which brings about by rational evidence a 'forced consent'. There is however in Warfield's view a subjective element which means that the faith exercised in a true and religious sense can never be cold and passionless. This element is fiducia (trust). For Warfield, all faith has three elements, notitia, assensus and fiducia.<sup>1</sup>

He argues, as a protestant theologian, that the emphasis ought to be with fiducia, i.e. faith involves more than assent of the understanding. For Warfield, trust is involved in all faith whether religious or not. This is because of his two-fold distinction that the ground of knowledge is mental perception and that of faith is authority or testimony. In the former the 'reason' is more prominent, in the latter 'trust' is most evident.

"Faith then emerges as the appropriate name of those acts of mental conduct in which the element of 'trust' is prominent."<sup>2</sup>

What then are the implications of this for 'religion'? For Warfield, in religious faith, "this prominent implication of trust reaches its height."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., Faith in its Psychological Aspects, op.cit., p.402.
  2. Ibid., p.392.
  3. Ibid., p.392.



It is at this point in his thesis that Warfield begins to struggle to hold together the objective revelation of Holy Scripture and the subjective involvement of the religious man with his God.

His starting point is that belief in general differs from religious belief only in the nature of its objects, the latter being religious. It is the complexity of emotions involved when a religious man assents to religious propositions which makes his state of mind different from any other act of faith. Here 'trust' as "an active expression of that sense of dependence in which religion largely consists,<sup>1</sup> is more prominent. A man of religious faith does not merely assent to religious propositions, but is through his affirmations expressing his dependence upon a person.

"It is the nature of trust to seek a personal object on which to repose, and it is only natural, therefore, that what we call religious faith does not reach its height in assent to propositions of whatever religious content and however well fitted to call out religious trust, but comes to its rights only when it rests with adoring trust on a person."<sup>2</sup>

Warfield does not here state how 'faith in a person' and 'faith in a proposition' correlates. What he does state clearly is that religious trust rests, as does all faith on evidence as its ground. Just because saving faith is a matter of 'the heart' rather than of the intellect does not exclude the element of intelligent assent and the

---

1. Ibid., p.393.

2. Ibid., p.393.

recognition of the evidence which makes such assent possible. If the evidence is adequate and we do not believe, then the fault is ours. It is therefore evident why sinful man is incapable of trusting God. Subjectively he cannot believe. Warfield offers a Calvinist solution - 'faith' is the free gift of God. This is attributed to the Holy Spirit who without doing violence to man's physiological constitution creates a capacity for faith in the light of the evidence.

"It proceeds by the divine illumination of the understanding, softening of the heart, and quickening of the will, so that the man so affected may freely and must inevitably perceive the force and yield to the compelling power of the evidence of the trustworthiness of Jesus Christ as Saviour submitted to him in the Gospel."<sup>1</sup>

What is of importance is that the evidence which produces trust in God is not presented to a mind like a 'tabula rasa'. The subjective considerations are vital. A subjective factor which is universal in man whether he is sinless or sinful or regenerated in his consciousness of being dependent upon God, physically, psychically, morally, spiritually.<sup>2</sup>

"This faith is but the active aspect of the consciousness of dependence, which, therefore, is the passive aspect of faith. In this sense no man exists, or ever has existed, or ever will exist, who has not 'faith'."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Ibid., pp.398-399.

2. Ibid., p.399.

3. Ibid., pp.399-400.

(4) The Work of the Spirit

Warfield has discussed the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit on a number of occasions.<sup>1</sup>

Our concern at this point is to discuss how he perceives the Spirit's work in a subjective sense in bringing a man to faith and knowledge in the light of Authority. How does the Spirit make one subjectively adequate for that which is objectively adequate?

We have already seen that Warfield's view of man as totally depraved in sin means that it is impossible for him to receive the 'grounds of faith' and to come to a knowledge of God apart from God doing something for man in man. This subjective work of the Spirit will result in faith as adoring trust.

The two aspects of this work most pertinent to our study is that of regeneration and the testimonium spiritus sancti.

(1) Regeneration:

Warfield expounds his position thus:

"The Reformed doctrine teaches as follows:  
 (1) As to the nature of regeneration:  
 (a) There are in the soul, besides the several faculties, habits or dispositions, innate or acquired, which lay the foundation for the soul's exercising its

---

1. The love of the Holy Ghost, Shorter Works of Warfield, Vol.II, pp.718-724; The Spirit of God in the Old Testament in Biblical and Theological Studies, pp.127-156, abridged in Shorter Words of Warfield, Vol.II, pp.711-717; intro to Abraham Kuyper's 'Work of the Holy Spirit', Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1969; article in Johnston's Universal Encyclopaedia.



faculties in a particular way. (b) These dispositions (moral) are anterior to moral action, and determine its character as good or evil. (c) In creation, God made the dispositions of Adam's heart holy. (d) In regeneration God recreates the governing dispositions of the regenerated man's heart holy. Regeneration is therefore essentially the communication of a new spiritual life, and is properly called a 'new birth'.  
 (2) As to its efficient cause: It is effected by divine power acting supernaturally and immediately upon the soul, quickening it to spiritual life, and implanting gracious principles of action.  
 (3) As to man's action: Conversion (conversio actualis) instantly follows, as the change of action consequent upon the change of character and consists in repentance, faith, holy obedience, etc."<sup>1</sup>

For Warfield, the Spirit of God must achieve a sovereign, free and supernatural work upon man apart from his co-operation in order that his nature be radically altered and that his response of unbelief be changed to that of faith.

(ii) The Testimonium Spiritus Sancti

Warfield sees us as being totally indebted to the Reformation in general and John Calvin in particular for our appreciation of the Holy Spirit.

"The doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit is a gift from John Calvin to the Church of Christ."<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. A.A. Hodge, revised by B.B. Warfield in Johnston's Universal Encyclopaedia, new edition 1896, reprinted in Shorter Works of Warfield, Vol.II, p.323.
  2. Introductory notes to the English Translation of A. Kuyper's Work of the Holy Spirit, reprinted in Shorter Works of Warfield I, pp.212-213.

It is not surprising therefore that Warfield should interact with Calvin in his exposition of the internal witness of the Holy Spirit. We are not concerned with the validity of Warfield's reading of Calvin.<sup>1</sup> Our purpose is to understand Warfield through his exposition of Calvin.

The internal witness of the Holy Spirit is that work of the Spirit which Calvin formulates as necessary for our receiving and accrediting of the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God, i.e. it is the required subjective work of God for us to receive 'authoritative truth'. Warfield sees Calvin's thesis forged in controversy with Rome. Why were the Scriptures to be received as God's Word if not on the authority of the Church? It is in this context Calvin states his position. For this polemical reason Warfield contends that Calvin neglects emphasising the Spirit's work in assimilating the revelatory content of scripture as well as bringing about its accreditation.

For Calvin there is no true faith apart from the Work of the Spirit, so that Warfield sees his 'testimony of the Spirit' as one application of his general doctrine of faith with respect to the Holy Spirit. The faith therefore which is generated by the Holy Spirit is 'true faith' which reaches its climax in adoring trust in the Godhead. The Testimonium Spiritus Sancti does not and cannot prove the Authority of Scripture, otherwise he would not draw upon many cogent and rational arguments such as the dignity of the subject matter and the heavenliness of the doctrine. But these arguments cannot produce true faith

---

1. This would be defended by Calvin Scholars like Seeberg, Davies and repudiated by others like Niesel.



"If it seemed to him a small matter that man should know that God is, it equally seemed to him a small matter that man should know what God is in the paradigius of the intellect, if he did not really know this God in the intimacy of communion which that phrase imports. And equally it seemed to him utterly unimportant that a man should be convinced by stress of rational evidence that the Scriptures are the Word of God, when he practically embraced these Scriptures as the Word of God and stayed his soul upon them."<sup>1</sup>

This knowledge of God, therefore, which is the experience of true faith as the result of the testimony of the Spirit, is for the elect of God. This Testimonium Spiritus Sancti is a pervasio, a notitia, a sensus.

It is not an immediate revelation, nor a blind conviction, but,

"a grounded conviction, formed in their minds by the Spirit by an act which rather terminates immediately on the faculties, enabling and effectively pervading them to reach a conviction on grounds presented to them . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Warfield seeks to show from Calvin, and this is where much of the controversy centres, that the Testimonium Spiritus Sancti is not a separate witness apart from the grounds of faith, the indicia. Warfield is aware of Calvin's repudiation of 'proofs' for true faith, but argues that it is the proofs without the Spirit's effectual working through them, which he has in mind. Warfield recognises

- 
1. Warfield, Calvin's Doctrine of Knowledge of God, op.cit., pp.74-75.
  2. Ibid., pp.79-80.



that some of Calvin's followers such as the writers of the French and Belgic Confessions may not have understood the testimony of the Spirit functioning in and through the proofs. However on the basis that Calvin uses scientific historico-critical grounds to determine canonicity and to establish the integrity of the text rather than relying exclusively on the Testimonium Spiritus Sancti, he claims Calvin as an ally in his defence of rational grounds for saving faith.

"That regeneration has noetic effects he is explicit and iterative in affirming: but that these noetic effects of 'regeneration' could supersede the necessity of scientific investigation in questions which rest for their determination on matters of fact - Calvin would be the last to imagine."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield was fully aware of the repercussions of allowing the 'witness of the Spirit' to be the means of accrediting Holy Scripture apart from the indicia. His doctrine of Holy Scripture could be assailed. Men like Robertson Smith and, as we shall see, Charles Briggs argued thus. To this Warfield responded:

"This palinary argument assures us unassailably that God speaks to us in Scripture; but it does not by itself assure us that the Bible itself is God's word. If we stop with it and seek no further for evidence of the authority of Scripture as a source of Knowledge of divine truth, we shall be very apt to find ourselves after a while evaporating the authority of the Scriptures altogether, and substituting for it the authority of the Holy Ghost in the heart, by which alone the authority of the Scriptural word is validated for us."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.103.

2. Warfield, A Review of Studies in Theology by James Denny, Christian Literature, October 1895. Shorter Studies of Warfield, Vol.II, pp.306-307.

The question before Warfield is; if the witness of the Spirit in the elect of God produces true faith as personal trust in Jesus Christ and also accredits the revelation of God, the Holy Scriptures through rational proof; how are we to correlate these two aspects of the Spirit's witness?<sup>1</sup>

Warfield recognises a weakness in Calvin at this point.<sup>1</sup> This tension led W.D. Livingstone in his thesis to write:

"Nowhere were we able to find any definite explanation for this strange combination of rationalism and fideism, nor do the Princetonians seem to be aware of any incongruity."<sup>2</sup>

The closest Warfield gets to resolving this difficulty is the following:

"Faith is the revelation, the substance of which is Christ, and faith in Christ, the substance of this revelation are logical implicates which involved one another: and we should probably be nearest to Calvin's thought if without raising questions of chronological succession, we should recognise them as arising together in the heart."<sup>3</sup>

Further light is given to this aspect of Warfield's thought as we consider 'religion and the study of theology'.

- 
1. Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God, p.105.
  2. W.D. Livingstone, op.cit., p.207.
  3. Calvin. Doctrine of the Knowledge of God, op.cit., p.107.

(5) Religion and the Study of Theology

One of the most common and recurring criticisms of Warfield is that his understanding of Authority and with it the Knowledge of God is formal, objective and intellectualistic. J.J. Markarian in his doctoral dissertation seeks to demonstrate that Warfield distorts the material principle of Calvin by objectifying it for apologetic reasons. Examples he gives are: his identifying of the Jesus of Historical Research with the Jesus of Faith; his separating of regeneration from experience, his making regeneration dependent upon a predestinating decree of God and the introduction of objectivity into the concept of faith and the witness of the Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

The following quotation indicates his stance:

"The correlation as broadened in Warfield now shows on the objective side, the scripture as a source for theological knowledge containing the facts of God's redeeming action, the climax of which is in the historical events associated with Jesus and in his historic death; and, with these facts, the interpretation, including metaphysical elements. The material principle has thus been brought into the objective side of the correlation and made into an object of research which can be vindicated on the grounds of historical investigation, not necessarily connected with one's dynamic personal relationship with God."<sup>2</sup>

Warfield's suspicion of mysticism and all subjective or experientially based theologising, which he saw as a

---

1. See Chapter II of Markarian, op.cit.

2. Markarian, Ibid., p.68.



challenge to classical Christian theism, might lead one to conclude with Markarian that the 'dynamic personal relationship' of faith is excluded from one's theological endeavours because of the latter's intellectual nature. This Warfield would seek to refute.

Andrew Hoffercker's<sup>1</sup> thesis questions the validity of Markarian's position.

Warfield himself speaks of the importance of true religious experience for Theology. In an article, 'Authority, Intellect and Heart', he says:

"No man can intellectually grasp the full meaning of the revelations of authority, save as the result of an experience of their power in life. Hence that the truth concerning divine things may be so comprehended that they may unite with a true system of divine truth, they must be: first, revealed in an authoritative word; second, experienced in a holy heart; and third, formulated by a sanctified intellect. Only as these three unite, then, can we have a true theology."<sup>2</sup>

It is important therefore that we consider how Warfield correlated religion and the study of theology.

- 
1. Hoffercker, Andrew, 'The relationship between the objective and subjective elements in Christian religious experience: a study in the systematic and devotional writings of Archibald, Alexander, Charles Hodge and B.B. Warfield', Unpublished Dissertation, Brown University, 1970.
  2. Warfield, B.B., Authority, Intellect, Heart. Presbyterian Messenger, Jan. 30, 1896, pp.7f. in S.S.W.II, p.671.

For Warfield, Theology is "that science which treats of God in himself and in his relations."<sup>1</sup>

This science has many disciplines, Apologetical, Exegetical, Historical, Systematic and Practical. He sees Systematic Theology as the scientific discipline.<sup>2</sup>

It is basically intellectualistic and its purpose is 'to make wise' over and against Practical Theology which emphasises the phrase 'unto Salvation'. Systematic Theology is therefore part of the organism which has as its goal that which is operative in Practical Theology. Warfield thinks his position is more clearly grasped if one considers the two-fold meaning of the word 'Knowledge'.

"Theology has for its end the 'Knowledge of God'."<sup>3</sup> What is in view in theology is not the shallow sense of pure intellection but that which involves the whole man and all his activities. So then:

"Theology does not exist  
when only the intellect is busied  
with the apprehension of logical  
propositions about God, but

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., Bible Student, Jan. 1900, in S.S.W. II, p.207.
  2. Ibid., p.209.
  3. Ibid., p.210.

can come into existence only in beings that possess religious natures and through the actions of the religious faculty."<sup>1</sup>

One may not know God apart from religious experience, therefore one may not theologise apart from such religious sensitivity.

"There is no 'Theology' that does not touch and move that religious nature by the movement of which alone may God be really known."<sup>2</sup>

All so called 'Theology' which does not produce a "truly religious knowledge of God"<sup>3</sup> is not Theology at all.

"Theology is the product of, appeals to, and impinges on the religious elements in man's nature, and nothing is 'Theology' which does not move in this sphere."<sup>4</sup>

It is no wonder then that in an address on the Religious life of Theological Students he should speak of the student of Theology being brought by his daily task into the presence of God.<sup>5</sup>

He describes their task as 'religious exercises'.

"Put your heart into your studies; do not merely occupy your mind with them, but put your heart into them. They bring you daily and hourly into the very presence of God; his ways, his dealing with men, the infinite majesty of his Being form their very subject-matter."<sup>6</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.210

2. Ibid., p.211

3. Ibid., p.211

4. Ibid., p.212

5. The Religious Life of Theology Students. An address delivered at the Autumn Conference at Princeton Theological Seminary, Oct. 4, 1911. A pamphlet in S.S.W.1, p.415

6. Ibid., p.416



So then:

"The student of Systematic Theology needs a very sensitive religious nature, a most thoroughly consecrated heart, and an outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon him, such as will fill him with that spiritual discernment without which all native intellect is in vain. He needs to be not merely a student, not merely a thinker, not merely a systematizer, not merely a teacher - he needs to be like the beloved disciple himself in the highest, truest and holiest sense, a divine."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield would therefore find it inconceivable that his Doctrine of Biblical Authority, as part of his theological endeavour, should be considered apart from the subjective dynamics of faith.

The purpose of this section is that of orientation in a two-fold sense: First, in order that we might appreciate the various factors related to Warfield's overall theological activity, focussing particularly on his understanding of Knowledge and Authority: Second, in order that we might see where in his perspective, the role of Biblical Authority and with it that of infallibility, is placed. This latter point will become clear if we draw the various threads of his views on the Knowledge of God together. We are not establishing a new point here. We are seeking merely to bring coherence to the elements which constitute his Theology.

Augustine, as expounded by Warfield, has been our basic model and we have taken the various ingredients in this work and expounded upon them. If we draw them together again, Warfield's position will be as follows:

- 
1. Warfield: 'The Ideal of Systematic Theology', Studies in Theology, 1932, p.

Man, per se, in his self consciousness intuitively apprehends the reliability of his sense experience, the objectivity and reality of the world experienced through one's senses and the primacy of the intellect in order that the sensible world be intelligible in our encounter with it. Similarly, in our awareness of total dependence and in our bearing the imago dei, we intuitively have a sense of the divine. This does not have its epistemological origin in what we experience empirically, but begins in the intelligible world. These ideas concerning God are continually impressed upon us by God so that we have more than a sensus divinitatis but the semen religionis. This Knowledge of God is not however a mere intellectual abstraction. The intellect is the avenue which gives knowledge to the heart and of the heart. The Knowledge of God which involves the whole person and is 'religious' (heart centred) is not therefore contentless. The Knowledge of God and the knowledge of self does not therefore by-pass intellectual reflection because of its existential nature. On the contrary, such knowledge is impossible unless God conforms to our epistemological requirements, including the 'first principle' of the primacy of the intellect. So then, one's sense of dependence and the bearing of the Divine image and the stamp of creativity in creation does not and has never existed apart from the activity of God through the intellect and in 'the heart' which results in the Knowledge of God. This Knowledge, prior to the intrusion of sin, caused man to love and serve and reverence his God. True Knowledge of God involves such a response of 'adoring trust'. Where there is no fiducia there is no true Knowledge of God. However, because of man's finitude, our knowledge is incomplete. It is imperfect. We see in a glass darkly. God still remains profoundly mysterious. So that even prior to the fall, authority was needed in order that we might know that which is infinite and beyond the range of our intellectual capabilities. Such revealed truth would not have been irrational, otherwise it would be unintelligible and we therefore would remain in ignorance.



The effect of sin is devastating. Because of man's moral and spiritual condition, true Knowledge of God is now impossible. The sense of the Divine is not obliterated but it is distorted. Man in rebellion is suppressing the revelation of God. Sin must therefore be dealt with objectively and subjectively. Without any mechanical intrusion into the organic interaction of God and man, God has been acting and interpreting his action. All this redemptive activity climaxes in Jesus Christ, in whom the problem of sin is dealt with. The message from God concerning his redemptive work is his revelation. This revelation from God is more objective and narrower than that which is part of the created order. God has acted in the empirical world and interpreted his action in the intelligible world. The enproduct is his revelation. It is his authoritative revelation which is to be identified with the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Scriptures are therefore of vital significance in the bringing of man to a true Knowledge of God in Jesus Christ. They are the objective and external authority whereby we know the ways and will of God. Such an authority is not unreasonable for man to believe. In fact, if it were not for man's sin and therefore blindness, he would find the evidences for faith irrefutable. They would produce a 'forced consent'. These 'evidences' which are addressed to our 'reason' follow the normal epistemic process for man. Through empirical investigation in conformity to the demands of logical first principles, we will be brought to the reasonableness of faith. But why is it that some believe and some do not? The answer is the sin of man and the need for God to work subjectively. The work of regeneration by the Spirit of God gives man spiritual life so that he becomes positively responsive. The internal witness of the Holy Spirit is that part of the Spirit's ministry which takes the indicia presented to our reason and convinces us so that the objective revelation, namely the Holy Scriptures are accredited as the authoritative word of God and become the means, in our obedience to it, of our living and personal knowledge of God, through Christ, by faith.



It is these Holy Scriptures, as the Word of God, which Warfield describes as infallible.

## II. WARFIELD'S DOCTRINE OF BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

### 1. WARFIELD'S VIEW OF REVELATION

Warfield's understanding of the nature of Biblical Authority and its status within God's purposes of redemption emanates from his statements concerning the revelational activity of God.

1. The Theological milieu, with respect to revelation, as understood by Warfield and over and against which he states his own position.

Warfield's religion and that of the Princeton School was essentially 'supernatural'. "The Religion of the Bible is a frankly supernatural religion."<sup>1</sup>

"God has intervened extraordinarily in the course of the sinful world's development, for the salvation of men otherwise lost."<sup>2</sup>

God and man did not exist on the same level of natural 'being'. God is self-sufficient, autonomous, uncaused. Man is totally dependent. The supernatural 'fact' of God will require a supernatural 'act' not only if man is to be but if he is to know the one on whom he is dependent. As Kraus points out the crux of Warfield's debate on his Theological adversaries centred on:

- 
1. Article on 'Revelation' from I.S.B.E., James Orr (Gen.Ed.) V.4, pp.2573-2582, reprinted as 'The Biblical Idea of Revelation, in Inspiration and Authority of the Bible', London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, p.71.
  2. Ibid., p.71.

"the possibility and actuality of immediate and direct action of God in history and nature."<sup>1</sup>

i.e. supernatural redemptive revelation.

"The Religion of the Bible thus announces itself, not as the product of man's search after God, if they may feel after him and find him, but as the creation in men of the gracious God, forming a people for himself, that they may show forth his praise. In other words, the religion of the Bible presents itself as distinctively a revealed religion."<sup>2</sup>

A.C. McGiffert shows the reason for Warfield's defense of his position:

"Previous to that time of Berkeley and the German idealists, theological thinking had been for the most part dualistic. It was governed by a sharp antithesis between the natural and the supernatural, and this antithesis implied that revelation is a miraculous process and hence necessarily infallible. But all this is changed by the modern doctrine of the divine immanence. God is now regarded as manifesting himself in the ordinary processes of nature as well as in miracle. Revelation, therefore, does not necessarily imply the direct and inerrant communication of divine truth to men. The human mind in its natural state, with its natural limitations and imperfections, may serve as a channel for divine messages. God may speak to men, even through much that is transient and imperfect

---

1. Op.cit., p.55.

2. Biblical Idea of Revelation, op.cit., p.72.



is bound up with the transmission of his word. Infallibility does not inhere in the idea of revelation."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield saw this anti-supernaturalism emerge in the Eighteenth Century with the Deists who although speaking of divine transcendence denied the reality of a special revelation as being unnecessary, metaphysically impossible or morally unworthy. The rationalists of the same period were of necessity anti-supernatural and the dogmatic rationalists who compromised with the deists denied any authoritative status to special revelation. He sees Kant striking a two-fold blow at revelation. First, he discredits the theistic proofs thus producing philosophical agnosticism. Second, he prepared the way for idealist philosophy with its pantheistic presuppositions which rejected any natural/supernatural distinction. All thought was conceived as the immanent work of God. Warfield sees the Christian Theists' responsibility in the Nineteenth Century as that of proving the possibility and actuality of a special supernatural revelational activity over and against immanentism.<sup>2</sup>

The theories against which he wishes us to view his own are in two classes. The lowest is that which states that revelation takes place only through the natural activities of the human mind. There are the deists, who reject any intrusion on the part of God. The pantheists see human thought as the unfolding of divine thought. For both that which we call revelation is on the human side the natural development of the moral and religious consciousness. The revelational data is therefore that

- 
1. A.C. McGiffert, 'Present Tendencies in Religious Thought', pp.204-205.
  2. Warfield, B.B., Article on 'Revelation' in Universal Encyclopaedia and Atlas, R. Johnston, (ed.), V.10, pp.79-81. Published New York, 1909, by D. Appleton & Co., Reprinted as 'Ideal of Revelation and Theories of Revelation', in 'Revelation and Inspiration'.



which is in creation and in our moral government. He recognises those who upgrade this theory by allowing a special status to Israel and Jesus. The Ritchlians, for example, although they deny any mystical connection of the soul with God, are willing to speak of the data of the historical Jesus as being revelational, i.e. it makes such an impression on the minds of men so that Jesus can be spoken of as revealing God to us.

There is a progression to higher ground in this lowest class, when men are willing to identify revelation with certain redemptive acts and especially if such acts are classified as miraculous. Often this is associated with an immediate activity of the Spirit on the mind of man enabling him to perceive the operation of God.

The second class of theories are those which see revelation as fundamentally the work of the Spirit of God, inclusive of which is the giving to man an inward certainty of divine life. Some, like A.B. Bruce are willing to speak of inspiration as that which assists one to read aright the divine name and nature.<sup>1</sup>

This, for Warfield, is not enough

"So long, however, as it conceives of this work of the Spirit as secondary, and ordinarily if not invariably successive to the series of redemptive acts of God, which are thought to constitute the real core of the revelation, it falls short of the Biblical idea. According to the biblical representations, the fundamental element in revelation is

---

1. Ibid., pp.41-44.

not the objective process of redemptive acts, but the revealing operations of the Spirit of God, which run through the whole series of modes of communication proper to Spirit, culminating in communications by the objective word."<sup>1</sup>

## 2. REVELATION - POSTIVELY STATED

Warfield recognises the various nuances of those Hebrew and Greek words not clearly communicated in the English translation 'Revelation'.<sup>2</sup> But contends that:

"These terms are ordinarily the common words for disclosing, making known, making manifest, applied with more or less heightened significance to supernatural acts or effects in kind."<sup>3</sup>

The term 'revelation' when used theologically has an active and passive meaning. In the former it is:

"the act of God by which he communicates to man the truth concerning himself - his nature, wants, will or purposes; in the passive meaning, the knowledge resultant upon such activity of God."<sup>4</sup>

With the majority of Reformed theologians Warfield distinguishes two species of revelation, General and Special. By General Revelation, he means that Knowledge of God communicated through natural phenomena and which is

1. Ibid., p.44.

2. Biblical Idea of Revelation, op.cit., pp.97-101.

3. Ibid., p.97.

4. Op.cit., p.37.

continuously addressing itself to all intelligent creatures so as to meet and supply their religious aspirations. Special Revelation is that activity made necessary by man's sin. In source and in mode it is essentially supernatural. It is adapted to the fallenness of man and is addressed in particular to the elect in order that they might be rescued from their deformed condition.

These two species of Revelation are interdependent.

"They constitute together a unitary whole, and each is incomplete without the other. In its most general idea, revelation is rooted in creation and relations with his intelligent creatures unto which God has brought himself by giving them being. Its object is to realise the end of man's creation, to be attained only through Knowledge of God and perfect and unbroken communication with him. On the entrance of sin into the world, destroying this communication with God and obscuring the Knowledge of him derived from nature, another mode of revelation was necessitated, having also another content, adapted to the new relation to God and the new conditions of the intellect, heart and will brought about by sin."<sup>1</sup>

Our concern is with this special, supernatural revelation in Warfield's thought.

(a) Revelation and Historical Development

The progressive nature of God's making of himself known, is bound in Warfield's exposition to that of historical development. In the course of history God's revelation is progressively received by individuals:

---

1. Op.cit., pp.74-75.



"A family, a tribe, a nation, a race, until, when the fullness of time was come, it was made the possession of the whole world."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield recognises the close relationship between historical event, redemption and revelation. However, he is unhappy in speaking of revelation as 'an act', rather than 'a word'. Neither will he speak of a revelation unto knowledge apart from redemptive acts, which bring us unto 'saving knowledge'.

Vital to Warfield's whole perspective is his contention that special revelation is an essential part of the redeeming work of God, for the basic reason that revelation results in knowledge and unless we understand and perceive the significance of the redemptive acts which culminate in Christ, we cannot have that knowledge which is 'able to make us wise unto salvation.'

"Revelation thus appears, however, not as the mere reflection of the redeeming acts of God in the minds of men, but as a factor in the redeeming work of God, a component part of the series of his redeeming acts, without which that series would be incomplete and so far inoperative for its main end . . . It is therefore not made even a mere constant accompaniment of the redemptive acts of God, giving their explanation that they might be understood. It occupies a far more independent place among them than this, and as frequently precedes them to prepare their way as it accompanies or follows them to interpret their meaning. It is in one word, itself a redemptive act of God and by no means the least important in the series of his redemptive acts."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.79.

2. Ibid., pp.80-81.

In this historical development of revelation as part of God's redemptive work, Warfield sees three steps. (He qualifies these three stages by commenting that discrimination between each is not absolute and that the chronology is not watertight). First, there was the patriarchal age characterised by Theophany. This was a period of outward manifestation like 'the burning bush' and 'the cloudy pillar'. Second, there was the age of prophecy, in which men received inward prophetic inspiration. This reached its climax in the New Testament age of the Spirit. Third, there was the Apostolic period in which revelation was through the medium of the written word.

In all this:

"The revealing Spirit speaks through chosen men as his organs, but through these organs in such a fashion that the most intimate processes of their souls become the instruments by means of which he speaks his mind."<sup>1</sup>

(b) Modes of Revelation

Warfield's classification of the modes of revelation is not according to chronology. There are three, external manifestation, internal suggestion and concursive operation. What he means by external manifestation is a theophany or some such supernatural intervention. In such:

"The objectivity of the mode of communication which is adopted is intense and it is thrown up to observation with the greatest emphasis."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.82.

2. Ibid., p.85.



This revelation is a 'naked message of God'.<sup>1</sup>

The second mode, internal suggestion is that associated with vision and dreams and often concurrent with Theopanies. This was particularly evident in the prophetic period. Warfield, seeking to emphasise the supernatural nature of such revelation, addressed himself to the question of how the natural and human relate to the supernatural and divine in this revelation.

"And although, throughout its entire duration, God, in fulfillment of his promise (Deut.XVIII:18), put his words in the mouths of his prophets and gave them his commandments to speak, yet it would seem inherent in the very employment of men as instruments of revelation that the words of God given through them are spoken by human mouths; and the purity of their supernaturalness may seem so far obscured. And when it is not merely the mouths of men with which God thus serves himself in the delivery of his messages, but their minds and hearts as well - the play of their religious feelings, or the processes of their logical reasoning, or the tenacity of their memories, as, say, in a psalm or in an Epistle, or a history - the supernatural element in the communication may easily seem to retire still further into the background."<sup>2</sup>

In no sense will Warfield allow the curtailment of the supernaturalness in this revelation due to these considerations. On the contrary he argues that the prophetic emphasis is that:

---

1. Ibid., p.85.

2. Ibid., p.85.



"The Divine Word delivered through men is the pure word of God, diluted with no human admixture whatever."<sup>1</sup>

This he seeks to justify by four reasons.

First, the prophet speaks only when commanded. Two of the many texts he quotes are Deut. XVIII:15, 18, 20. 'I will put my words in his mouth', and 2 Sam. XV:3, 19. 'He put all these words in the mouth of your handmaid'. Of these and others Warfield says:

"It is a process of nothing other than dictation' which is thus described . . . though of course, the question may remain open of the exact processes by which this dictation is accomplished."<sup>2</sup>

Second, the Hebrew word for prophet means a spokesman of God. Third, a prophet never puts forward his own words, as in Ezekiel 3:26f. Fourth, the nomenclature of prophecy presupposes the 'vision-form'. Here Warfield discusses a common emphasis of 'the prophets' that they received their divine communication in visions. Warfield is careful to distinguish his own view from that of those who sees a vision as an external appearance and objective speech addressed to the bodily eye and ear or an estatic state. Such an understanding neglects the fact that the pure word of God comes not only to the prophets but from them and that

"the intelligence of the prophets is alert throughout the whole process of the reception and delivery of the revelation made through them."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Ibid., p.86.
  2. Ibid., p.87.
  3. Ibid., p.90.

These experiences Warfield is happier describing as the:

"Movement of mind determined by something extraneous to the subjects will . . . extraneous to the totality of the subject's own psychoses."<sup>1</sup>

Here his key text, which he exegetes is 2 Peter 1:20 , 21. Where prophets are spoken of as 'men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God'. The emphasis for Warfield is

"The passivity of the prophets with respect to the revelation given through them."<sup>2</sup>

He exegetes *ΦΕΡΕΙΝ* (to be borne) as to mean that they contributed nothing. By this passivity he is not saying that the intelligence of the prophets was inactive.

"It is intended to deny only that their intelligence was active in the production of their message: that it was creatively as distinguished from receptively active."<sup>3</sup>

Warfield is aware that this sounds mechanical and would seem to deny the evident personality of the prophet in his message. However the latter Warfield describes as subordinate considerations. The Biblical emphasis is that God is himself the author.

"We may speak of this, if we will, as the accommodation of the revealing God to the several prophetic individualities but we should avoid

- 
1. Ibid., p.90.
  2. Ibid., p.91.
  3. Ibid., p.91.

thinking of it externally and therefore mechanically, as if the revealing Spirit artificially phrased the message which he gives through each prophet in the particular forms of speech proper to the individuality of each, so as to create the illusion that the message comes out of the heart of the prophet himself."<sup>1</sup>

What Warfield is seeking to preserve in all this is the purity of the divine message through human instrumentality.

The third mode of revelation, Warfield calls 'concursive operation'. It is this mode which is most closely identified with his doctrine of Scripture and therefore with its infallibility. It is distinguished from prophecy by its employment of the total personality of the organ of revelation.

"It has been common to speak of the mode of the Spirit's action in this form of revelation, therefore, as an assistance, a superintendence, a direction, a control, the meaning being that the effect aimed at - the discovery and enunciation of Divine truth - is attained through the action of the human powers - historical research, logical reasoning, ethical thought, religious aspirations - acting not by themselves, however, but under the prevailing assistance, superintendence, direction, control of the Divine Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

The Spirit of God in revealing his will and word is through concursive operation more intimately interacting with the person who is the agent of the revelation. The Spirit's work is however more than mere encouragement but is a work in and through them.

---

1. Ibid., p.93.

2. Ibid., pp.94-95.



". . . elevating them, directing them, controlling them, energising them, so that, as his instruments, they rise above themselves and under his inspiration do his work and reach his aim. The product, therefore, which is attained by their means is his product through them."<sup>1</sup>

Human traits are of course, traceable in this revelation, but nevertheless remains totally the divine word.

What then, one might ask, of Jesus Christ as 'the Revelation' of God? To this Warfield makes two observations. First, the revelation of Christ is so unique that it is sui generis and thus beyond classification. Second, all other revelational activity which is classifiable is either a preparation for or explanation of this climax of revelation.

"The entirety of the New Testament is but the explanatory word accompanying and giving its effect to the fact of Christ. And when this fact was in all its meaning made the possession of man, revelation was completed and in that sense ceased."<sup>2</sup>

By way of summary, we can say the following six things about Warfield's view of revelation:

1. The revelation of God in creation and that required because of man's fallenness is interdependent
2. Because of man's sin the emphasis lies on 'special' revelation

---

1. Ibid., p.95.

2. Ibid., p.96.

3. This special revelation is supernatural i.e. outwith the natural processes of man's knowing.
4. Special revelation is given progressively
5. It stands in a very express relationship to the progress of God's redemptive work climaxing in Jesus Christ
6. Through whichever modes God uses in his revelational activity, his word is communicated in its purity.

(c) Revelation and Holy Scripture

This direct supernatural communication of special knowledge, which Warfield calls 'special revelation', is identified, in his thinking, with Holy Scripture to-day. How he justifies this, we will consider later. For completeness in this section, we shall merely draw these two aspects together.

Since Revelation is not given merely to inform its recipient but rather to bring the person to a true and living knowledge of God. So revelation is not given merely to produce Scripture. What is important is that we perceive the position of Holy Scripture within the redemptive purpose of God. There are for Warfield two dangers, first that of exalting Scripture as an end in itself, second that of making it a mere human record of revelation. For Warfield, in order that the Scriptures fulfill their redemptive purpose, they must be part of God's revelational activity. He therefore conceives the mode of their coming into being (Inspiration) as a method of revelation and therefore part of God's redemptive work.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Op.cit., pp.46-47.

"Scripture records the sequence of God's redeeming acts. But it is much more than merely 'the record, the interpretation, and the literary reflection of God's grace in history'. Scripture records the direct revelations which God gave to men in days past . . . But it is much more than a record of past revelations. It is itself the final revelation of God, completing the whole disclosure of his unfathomable love to lost sinners, the whole proclamation of his purposes of grace, and the whole exhibition of his gracious provisions for their salvation."<sup>1</sup>

## II. THE BIBLE AS 'THE WORD OF GOD'

In Warfield's writings there are two explicit factors which cause him self-consciously to state his doctrine of Biblical Authority. The first is exegetical and the second is apologetical.

### (1) Exegetical Considerations

We have already observed Warfield's use of exegesis to justify his view of revelation. We shall now examine more closely his exegesis which causes him to equate revelation as 'concursive operation' with the Holy Scriptures.

#### (a) The General Attitude of the New Testament Writers to the Old Testament

Warfield would seek to show that the writers of the New Testament treated the text of the Old Testament scriptures as 'the Word of God'.

---

1. Ibid., p.48.



". . . there are in particular two classes of passages, each of which, when taken separately, throws into the clearest light their habitual appeal to the Old Testament text as to God himself speaking, while together they make an irresistible impression of the absolute identification by their writers of the Scriptures in their hands with the Living Voice of God. In one of these classes of passages the Scriptures are spoken of as if he were the Scriptures: in the two together, God and the Scriptures are brought into such conjunction as to show that in point of directness of authority no distinction was made between them."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield then proceeds to give examples. He, in practice, divides them into three classes. In the first group, he claims that Scripture and God are so close in the mind of the writers that 'God says' and 'Scripture says' are synonymous. He lists Galatians 3:8 "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying 'In you shall all the nations be blessed'." Where Paul quotes from Genesis XII:1-3. Also Romans 9:17 "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh . . . and then Paul quotes from Exodus IX:16. The second group are those in which, although it is not God in whose mouth these sayings are placed in the text of the Old Testament, yet though the habitual identification of 'Scripture says' and 'God says', the words of the Old Testament text are attributed to God. He lists five examples. Two will suffice for our purposes; Matt. 19:4 and 5 quoting Gen. 2:24. "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh,'" ; and Hebrews 3:7f quoting Ps. 95:7-11. "Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, 'To-day, when you hear his voice do not harden your hearts . . .'"

---

1. Warfield, B.B. "It says, 'Scripture says', 'God says', from, Pres. and Ref. Review, Vol.X, 1899, pp.472-510, reprinted in I.A.B., pp.299-300.

It is over the third group that Warfield feels obliged to defend his contention. These examples are those in which Scripture seems to be adduced with a subjectless *λεγει* or *φησιν* Warfield argues that the authoritative subject of the sentence, which is taken for granted is either 'the Divinely given word' or 'God'. Some examples cited are: Romans 9:15 quoting Exodus 33:19. "For (he) says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy . . .'." Eph. 4:8 quoting Ps. 68:18. "Therefore (it) is said, 'When he ascended on high he led a host of captives . . .'." Heb. 8:5 quoting Ex. 25:40. ". . . for when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed (by God) saying, 'See that you make everything according to the pattern . . .'."

What Warfield found disturbing among some of his contemporaries was not their divergent opinions over the proper subanditum, but their tendency to treat such subjectless verbs as more or less impersonals. He sees e.g. T.R. Abbot in the International Critical Commentary on Ephesians as being more determined to reject the implications of what the text is saying than in finding out what Paul is saying. He takes the verb in Eph. 4:8 as indefinite thus making the source of the quotation unimportant.

In response Warfield using Romans 9:15-17 as an e.g. argues that there is no distinction in the thinking of the Apostle between God speaking in the text and the Scriptures themselves. In Roms. 9:15, God is presupposed but in 9:17 he supports this word of God by quoting Exodus 9:6 with the prefix Scripture says. Here then, says Warfield, what Scripture says, and what God says are synonymous in habitual thought, for they are ranged together in consecutive clauses, with the second meaningless unless translated back into the equivalent 'God says'. Therefore in all of Paul's writings it would be natural to have presupposed *ὁ θεος* before *λεγει*



- (b) An exegesis of II Timothy 3:16 with particular reference to *Θεοπνευστος* (usually translated 'inspired of God' re the Old Testament Scriptures).

For Warfield *Θεοπνευστος* does not mean inspired by God and says nothing about inspiring but only of spiring or spiration. By this he means:

"What it says of Scripture is, not that it is 'breathed into by God' or is the product of the divine 'inbreathing' into its human authors, but that it is breathed out by God. 'God-breathed', the product of the creative breath of God. In a word what is declared by this fundamental passage is simply that the Scriptures are a Divine product, without any indication of how God has operated in producing them."<sup>1</sup>

The Breath of God, therefore, which is the symbol of his Almighty power (Ps. 33:6) is that which has brought into being, the Scriptures.

The context of 2 Tim. 3:16 is the greatness of Timothy's advantage, i.e. having a knowledge of the 'Sacred Writings', he can be 'wise into salvation'. 'Sacred writings' is a technical expression not used in the New Testament. But found in Philo and Josephus to designate a body of authoritative books which constitute the Jewish law. These, says Warfield, are being set aside as being better than the

- 
1. Article on 'Inspiration' from the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Vol.3, Chicago 1915, Howard-Severance Co., reprinted in 'The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible' under the title 'The Biblical Idea of Inspiration', London, 1959, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, pp.132-133.



oral teaching which Timothy had received because these were of Divine origin. He recognises that there is some controversy over the construction of the sentence in translation, i.e. the possibility of Either 'Every Scripture or all Scripture is God-breathed and therefore profitable', Or 'Every Scripture or all Scripture being God-breathed is as well profitable'. But for him this is indifferent.

" . . . to say that every part of these Sacred Scriptures is God-breathed and to say that the whole of these Sacred Scriptures is God-breathed, is, for the main matter all one."<sup>1</sup>

He recognises that this text does not tell us which books are included, by what precise operation God has produced them, or everything for which the Scriptures are made valuable, only their value for the man of God. However, he is seeking to demonstrate that the Scriptures are to be received as Trustworthy because they are the product of the Breath of God.

(c) 2 Peter 1:19-21.

The context is that Peter is assuring his readers that what had been known to them of 'the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ did not rest on cunningly devised fables,' for two reasons. First, because of the Testimony of every witness of Christ's glory and second, an even better testimony (a more sure word) the prophetic word. This prophetic word could either be the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures (Warfield's opinion) or that specifically

---

1. Ibid., p.134.

designated as prophetic. The source of 'this Word' lies not with men but with God, i.e. it did not come by private interpretation or human investigation but was 'borne' by the Holy Spirit. Warfield sees this as one step forward in our understanding of how God produced the Scriptures. There was on the one hand, the instrumentality of men (who spoke from him) and on the other, the operation of the Holy Spirit (bearing them). But the emphasis is on the activity of God.

"What is 'borne' is taken up by the 'bearer', and conveyed by the 'bearer's' power, not its own, to the 'bearer's' goal. Not its own."<sup>1</sup>

The things spoken were God's not man's. But, concludes Warfield, and here is the importance for his use of the term 'infallible':

"It will be observed that the proximate stress is laid here, not on the Spiritual value of Scripture (though that too, is seen in the background), but on the Divine Trustworthiness of Scripture."<sup>2</sup>

(d) John 10:34f

Used as an illustration of how Jesus approached the Scriptures.

For Warfield, this passage conveys how far the supreme trustworthiness of Scripture extends. The context is Jesus seeking to repel the charge of blasphemy. His

---

1. Ibid., p.137

2. Ibid., p.137.

defence consists of an appeal to Scripture. Jesus does two things. First, he quotes the Psalms and adduces it as law, i.e. he gives legal authority to that which is beyond 'the Torah'. Second, he argues that the Scriptures cannot be broken (a word used re the breaking of the law, e.g. the Sabbath), i.e. it is impossible for the Authority of Scripture to be annulled. For Warfield, Jesus' argument is this ; if all of Scripture cannot be annulled then the passage cited is of irrefragable authority. But, says Warfield, since that which is being quoted by Jesus, is a causal clause .'. the authority of the Scriptures stretches to the very form of expression of its most causal clauses.

This rebuttal of a satirical nature, by Jesus, is only possible, claims Warfield, because Jesus and the Jews (as well as the New Testament writers) were on a common ground of appeal, and he cites to reinforce this:

- (i) The Scriptures are referred to as 'the documents'.
- (ii) The constant use of the simple formula 'It is written', Matt. 4:4,7,10 ; Lk. 24:44-46. (Among the first and last words of Jesus).
- (iii) The necessity of the fulfillment of all written in Scripture. Mk. 14:49 ; John 13:18,17:12, Mk. 9:12,13.
- (iv) The source of all error in divine things is ignorance of the Scriptures. Matt. 22:29. Mk. 12:24.
- (v) The Scriptures quoted as God being the Author. Matt. 19:4, quoting Gen. 2:24.

To the thesis that Jesus was just reflecting the opinion of his day, Warfield responds that even in his humiliation he is the faithful and true witness. And to the charge that the opinions of his followers are being thrust upon him, he replies that Jesus' attitude to the Old Testament



Scriptures are too constant, too minute, intimate and in part incidental.

Warfield draws together these exegetical considerations and concludes:

"This much we can say without straining, that the designation of Scripture as 'scripture' and its citation by the formula 'it is written', attests primarily its indefectible authority; the designation of it as 'oracles' and the adduction of it by the formula 'it says', attests primarily its immediate divinity. Its authority rests on its divinity and its divinity expresses itself in its truthworthiness; and the New Testament writers in all their use of it, treat it, as what they declare it to be - a God-breathed document, which, because God-breathed, as through and through trustworthy in all its assertions, authoritative in all its declarations, and down to its last particular, the very word of God, His 'oracles'."<sup>1</sup>

## (2) Apologetic Considerations

We have already observed how Warfield's Apologetic Method relates to his understanding of Knowledge and Authority. Here we are concerned as to how he uses this method to explicate his view of Scripture.

In an article on 'Apologetics',<sup>1</sup> Warfield says there are five types of Apologetics:

---

1. Ibid., p.150.
2. 'New Schaff-Herzog. Engyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge', edited by S.M. Jackson (Funt and Wagnalls Co., New York, 1908).

- (i) Philosophical, where one grapples with the problem of Theism and the establishment of the Being of God.
- (ii) Psychological, concerning the capacity of the human mind to grasp the reality.
- (iii) The Medium of Communication, whereby one establishes the reality of the Supernatural in history.
- (iv) Historical Apologetics, to demonstrate the historical accuracy of say, Christian claims re. Jesus.
- (v) Bibliological Apologetics, to establish the Truthworthiness of Holy Scripture.

We are, of course, most concerned with the Bibliological variety but before considering his stance on this it is important to see the logical connection of these five elements in Apologetics.

For Warfield, in order to engage in the Science of Theology, which is based on the Authority of Scripture, one must be assured of the Knowledge of God in Scripture and before that one must be assured of the Knowledge of God in the world and before that one must be assured that the Knowledge of God is possible to man in the world, and before that one must be assured that there is a God to know. It is evident therefore that the weight of Warfield's Bibliological Apologetics is addressed to 'the believer'.

" . . . instead of being in the order of thought, the first religious truth which we embrace, upon which, subsequently the entire fabric of true religion rests, it is the last and accounting attitude of those sacred books from which we derive our religious knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Warfield, B.B. and Hodge, A.A., 'Inspiration', Presbyterian Review, Ap, 1881, VII, p.226.

The Truth of the Christian Religion is not therefore dependent upon the Inspiration and Authority of the Scriptures:

"Revelation came in large part before the record of it and the Christian Church before the New Testament Scripture. Inspiration can have no meaning if Christianity is not true, but Christianity would be true and divine, and being so, would stand, even if God had not been pleased to give us, in addition to his revelation of saving truth, an infallible record of that revelation absolutely errorless, by means of inspiration."<sup>1</sup>

This does not, however, rule out Warfield's conviction that his view of Scripture is reasonable, even for those who have not yet believed.

In a pamphlet called 'The Divine Origin of the Bible'.<sup>2</sup> Warfield asks the question - "Is there reason to believe that God has been concerned at all in the origin of the Bible".<sup>3</sup> He seeks to answer this question, by reasoning without assumptions through a process of induction so that every man's mind can be open to this analysis:

"Our purpose is to look upon the Bible simply as one of the facts of the universe, of which every theory of the universe must take account, and for which, just as surely as for gravitation, it must make account or itself die, and then ask (and press the question) : What kind of

---

1. Ibid., p.227.

2. Pub. 1882, Pres. Board of Publications, Philadelphia, P.A. Reprinted in 'Revelation and Inspiration' - Appendix I.

3. Ibid., p.429.



cause must be assumed to account for it just as it is and just as it arose in the world? Thus we may inductively come to an answer to the query : 'Must we assume superhuman activities at work in the genesis of this Book'?"<sup>1</sup>

Five factors, according to Warfield, must cause one to accept the Divine origin of the Bible.

The first is the history of the Bible. He examines its unique position in the world of western civilization, its influence on legislation, social habits and form of government. He shows how its emphasis has over-thrown prejudice, habits and customs. Its influence he maintains has only been beneficent, elevating man and meeting his needs. Compare, he says, cultures before and after they received the Scriptures.

The second is the structure of the Bible. Enormous diversity of background in the writing of the Books and yet a remarkable unity in an unbroken historical continuity from Genesis to Malachi to the New Testament. The Book is taken up with the portraiture of one person - Jesus Christ. Predictions in the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New and in meticulous detail re. Jesus.

"Now, the Bible, as a whole, is a result or an effect in the Universe, and it must have had, as such, an adequate cause, which, since the result is an intelligent one, must have been an intelligent cause : there is the ontological argument, and it proves a superhuman intelligent cause for the Bible. It consists of orderly arranged

---

1. Ibid., p.430.

parts of an orderly developed scheme: there is the cosmological argument, and again it proves the activity of an intelligent cause (and much else not now now to be brought out) of at least fifteen hundred years duration. It is a cause of marvellous effects in the world for the production of which it is most admirably designed, and its whole inner harmony and all its inner relations are most deeply graven with the marks of a design kept constantly before some intelligent mind for at least 1500 years."<sup>1</sup>

Third is the teaching of the Bible. The cumulative evidence of the content demands, says Warfield, a divine origin. The elevation and grandeur both of the teaching itself, and the assumptions on which the teachings are based re God and Man. The precise accord of the teachings of Scripture with the findings of Science. The Truths of the Bible being universal making entrance into all races and classes of men. The truths of the Bible find us and we recognise them as actual truths. The remarkable simplicity of its manner and the transparent honesty of its tone authenticates its truthfulness. These arguments cumulatively point to a divine origin.

The fourth are the special characteristics of the Bible, in particular the progressive character of the teaching, e.g. It begins with first principles expressed in outward symbols, advancing gradually to a full system, working out its approaches in history before delivering it in dogma. Or again the ritualistic system of worship leads to the spiritual worship of the New Testament.

The fifth is the impossibility of accounting for the Bible on the basis that it had only a human origin. To see, e.g. the supernatural as a myth or a deliberate forgery, fails to recognise that before the writing of say, the

---

1. Ibid., p.438.

Gospels, there was inadequate time for such to develop. Warfield concludes:

"A supernatural origin for the Bible appears cumulatively proven."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield is not seeking in this apologia to demonstrate the infallible authority of Holy Scripture. He is merely seeking to use his contention that the Bible must have a divine origin as a preamble to those arguments which he will use to convince those who accept his primary thesis or who believe.

". . . the facts and arguments which have been adduced in a general way to prove the general divine origin of the Bible not only prepare the way, but even, narrowly questioned, will raise a strong presumption, for the further conclusions that this book has been not only in a general way given by God, but also specifically inspired in the giving, that thus its every word is from him, and that it is worthy of our reverent and loving credence in its every particular."<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the witness of the Scriptures to itself which, we have already considered under Exegetical Considerations, the two major reasons presented to the believer for embracing his high view of Scripture is that it is the historic doctrine of the Church and that it is necessary to satisfy our religious need.

According to Warfield, his view of Biblical Authority is the Church doctrine.

---

1. Ibid., p.447.

2. Ibid., p.447.



"Christendom has always reposed upon the belief that the utterances of this book are properly oracles of God. The whole body of Christian literature bears witness to this fact. We may trace its stream to its source, and everywhere it is vocal with a living faith in the divine trustworthiness of the Scriptures of God in everyone of their affirmations."<sup>1</sup>

This he affirms for three reasons. First, the testimony of the Church throughout history. He quotes Wm. Sanday in his Bampton lectures on 'Inspiration' to the effect that the idea of even 'verbal' inspiration is present from the Earliest Fathers and Sanday did not hold this view. Illustrating his contention from Origen, Irenaeus, Polycarp, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Samuel Rutherford, Richard Baxter and Charles Hodge, e.g. Irenaeus 'the Scriptures are perfect, seeing that they are spoken by God's word and his Spirit', he maintains that:

"Such testimonies are simply the formulation by the Theologians of each age of the constant faith of Christians throughout all ages."<sup>2</sup>

Second, the detailed exegesis and care whereby Christians have handled the text of Scripture.

"There is but one viewpoint which will account for or justify the minute and loving pains which have been expended upon the text of Scripture, by the long life of Commentators that has extended unbrokenly from the first Christian ages to our own."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., 'The Church Doctrine of Inspiration', 'Bibliotheca Sacra', V.51, 1894, pp.614-640. Reprinted in 'Inspiration and Authority of the Bible', op.cit., p.107.
  2. Ibid., p.109.
  3. Ibid., p.109.

Whether the interpretation be allegorical or literal he sees the same reverence for the text, in the passionate desire to glean every detail of the meaning from the Scriptures.

Third, is the uniform testimony of the Creeds and Confessions of the Church, both Protestant and Catholic.

From the Apostles' Creed and its 'according to the Scriptures', to the Council of Trent to its affirmation that God is the Author Scripture. From the Council of Vatican I which states:

"The church holds (the books of the Old and New Testaments) to be sacred and canonical, not because, having been carefully composed by mere human industry, they were afterwards approved by her authority; not merely because they contain revelation with no admixture of error; but because, having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author."<sup>1</sup>

To the Westminster Confession of Faith, where we find, according to Warfield:

". . . the most complete, the most admirable, the most perfect statement of the essential Christian doctrine of Holy Scripture which has ever been formed by man."<sup>2</sup>

The uniform and consistent witness of the church is, says Warfield, of embracing his view of Scripture.

---

1. Quoted by Warfield, Ibid., p.111.

2. Ibid., p.111.

"The Church has always believed her Scriptures to be the book of God, of which God was in such a sense the author that every one of its affirmations of whatever kind is to be esteemed as the utterance of God, of infallible truth and authority."<sup>1</sup>

The Christian believer is to be convinced by the witness of Scripture to itself through exegesis, by listening to the Catholic teaching of the Church through the ages and by the need of such a Biblical Authority to satisfy his religious need.

Warfield perceives the average Christian not as an historical scholar. In the concrete situation of life we are dependent upon trustworthy Scriptures.

". . . it remains the profound persuasion of the Christian heart that without such an 'external authority' as a thoroughly trustworthy Bible, the soul is left without sure ground for a proper knowledge of itself, its condition and its need, or for a proper knowledge of God's provisions of mercy for it and his promises of grace to it - without sure ground, in a word, for its faith and hope."<sup>2</sup>

He continues:

"Such a Word of God, each one of us knows he needs - not a Word of God that speaks to us only through the medium of our fellow-men, men of like passions and weaknesses with ourselves so that we have to feel our way back to God's word through the Church, through tradition or through the Apostles standing

---

1. Ibid., p.112.

2. Ibid., p.124.



between us and God; but a Word of God in which God speaks directly to each of our souls. Such a Word of God, Christ and his Apostles offer us, when they give us the Scriptures . . . Thus the Church's sense of her need of an absolutely infallible Bible, has co-operated with her reverence for the Teaching of the Bible to keep her true, in all ages, to the Bible doctrine of plenary inspiration."<sup>1</sup>

These Scriptures having been 'breathed out' by God, can be now said to be plenary and verbally inspired. By plenary, he means:

". . . perfectly adequate for the attainment of the end designed, whatever that might have been."<sup>2</sup>

By verbal, he does not mean dictation:

"or that, at least in some way, the revelation of the thought, or the inspiration of the writer, was by means of the control which God exercised over his words."<sup>3</sup>

What he wishes to express in verbal inspiration is that:

"the divine superintendence, which we call inspiration, extended to the verbal expression of the thoughts of the sacred writers, as well as to the thoughts themselves . . ."<sup>4</sup>

This Bible is therefore infallible.

- 
1. Ibid., p.125.
  2. Op.cit., p.232.
  3. Ibid., pp.232-233.
  4. Ibid., p.233.

### III. THE PHENOMENA OF SCRIPTURE

Here we are concerned with how Warfield relates his view of Biblical infallibility with the problems he faced re. the phenomena of Scripture, e.g. Canonicity, the non-availability of original manuscripts, the need for Textual criticism, the apparent errors in the text, etc., such as numerical inaccuracies, misquotations from one part of the Bible to another, historical and scientific mistakes, etc.

To appreciate Warfield's handling of the Phenomena, it is necessary for us to:

- (1) Consider how he understands the relationship of the divine and human elements in the production of Scripture.
- (2) Examine the logic or method he employs in approaching the phenomena.
- (3) Look at how he practically deals with (i) apparent errors, (ii) the New Testament use of the Septuagint, (iii) the problem of no original, extant autographs, (iv) the formation of the Canon of Holy Scripture.

(1) These two elements are improperly conceived, says Warfield, when one factor is so emphasised as to exclude the other. For this reason, he rejects both rationalism which sees The Bible merely as a human book and any notions of dictation which would make it docetic. It is equally improperly conceived when they are thought of as elements in the Bible, as lying over against each other, dividing the Bible between them, or, as factors in inspiration, as striving against and excluding each other. We must "conceive inspiration by concursus."<sup>1</sup> The result

---

1. Warfield, B.B., 'Divine and Human in the Bible'. The Pres. Journal, May 3rd, 1894, reprinted in Selected Shorter Writing of B.B. Warfield, Vol.II, p.548.

is a divine - human book, in which every word is at once divine and human. The human element he sees as self-evident. What they write:

"evidently for the most part, the product of their own mental and spiritual activities."<sup>1</sup>

and even when the initiative is assigned to God, it is men who are said to speak (2 Pet. 1:21 or Acts 1:16).

"The New Testament writers have therefore, no difficulty in assigning Scripture to its human authors, or in discovering in Scripture traits due to its human authorship."<sup>2</sup>

The divine element has already been emphasised. In therefore God's plan of redemption:

"The Scriptures were generated through sixteen centuries of this divinely regulated concurrence of God and man, of the natural and the Supernatural, of reason and revelation, of providence and grace."<sup>3</sup>

However, what Warfield will not accept is that the human aspect in any way affected the purity of the product as the word of God. Nevertheless this word was:

". . . given through men after a fashion which does no violence to their nature as men, and constitutes

- 
1. 'Inspiration', op.cit., p.229.
  2. The Biblical Idea of Inspiration, op.cit., p.152.
  3. 'Inspiration', op.cit., p.230.



the book also men's book as well as God's in every part expressive of the mind of its human authors."<sup>1</sup>

Inspiration for Warfield is a much more complex event than the mere heightening of human qualities or the energising of men to greater effort. Inspiration

". . . like all other products of time, are the ultimate effect of many processes co-operating through long periods."<sup>2</sup>

Inspiration is therefore related to the Sovereignty of God in the preparation of the conditions, the subject-matter, and in the preparation of the writers.

"Inspiration involves all this and not just an isolated action of the Divine Spirit . . . the production of Paul's letters were therefore spontaneous not unnatural or violent."<sup>3</sup>

In the providence of God even the personality of the writer was formed by God so that in his spontaneous reflection he would not under the superintendence of God discolour the pure word of God.

"When we give due place in our thoughts to the universality of the providential government of God, to the minuteness and completeness of its sway, and to its invariable efficacy, we may be inclined to ask what is needed beyond this mere

- 
1. Biblical Idea of Inspiration, op.cit., p.153.
  2. Ibid., p.154.
  3. Ibid., p.155.

providential government to receive the production of sacred books which should be in every detail absolutely accordant with the Divine will."<sup>1</sup>

But since man in the process of the production of Scripture must be more than guided but to be brought beyond his natural ability, 'inspiration' in a narrower sense is required. This latter form is what gives to the books their superhuman quality, their trustworthiness and authority. It also speaks the:

"Divine word immediately to each reader's heart and conscience; so that he does not require to make his way to God, painfully, perhaps even uncertainly, through the words of his servants, the human instruments in writing the Scriptures, but can listen directly to the Divine voice itself speaking immediately in the Scriptural word to him."<sup>2</sup>

This narrower form of inspiration is therefore a mode of the revelational/redemptive work of God in his providence and grace. Inspiration therefore produces a relationship between the divine and human elements analogous to the Lord's divine and human natures with the effect that as the human nature of Christ was sinless and errorless so the human aspect of the Bible is sinless and errorless.

But what of these human elements which are inaccurate? This says Warfield, can be

"decided only by an exhaustive and impartial examination of all the sources of evidence i.e. the claims and the phenomena of the Scriptures themselves."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.157.

2. Ibid., p.158.

3. 'Inspiration', op.cit., p.237.

He does however remind the impartial observer. There may be affirmations apparently inconsistent with the present teaching of science and history. The copies we are analysing are through human error imperfect. It is possible that we are failing to appreciate the point of view of the author. We may be destitute of circumstantial knowledge. Human forms of testing are prone to error. The Authors too are not omniscient. Their writings are not designed to teach philosophy, science or human history as such.

"They are not designed to furnish an infallible system of speculative theology. They were written in human languages, whose words, reflections, constructions and idioms bear everywhere indelible traces of human error. The record itself furnishes evidence that the writers were in large measure dependent for their knowledge upon sources and methods in themselves fallible ; and that their personal knowledge and judgements were in many matters hesitating and defective, or even wrong. Nevertheless, the historical faith of the Church has always been, that all the affirmations of Scripture of all kinds, whether of spiritual doctrine or duty, or of physical or historical fact, or of psychological or philosophical principle, are without any error, when the ipsissima verba of the original autographs are ascertained and interpreted in their natural and intended sense. There is a vast difference between exactness of statement, which includes an exhaustive rendering of details, an absolute literalness, which the Scriptures never profess, and accuracy, on the other hand, which secures a correct statement of the facts or principles intended to be affirmed. It is this accuracy and this alone, as distinct from exactness, which the Church doctrine maintains of every affirmation in the original text of Scripture without exception. Every statement accurately corresponds to truth just as far forth as affirmed."<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Ibid., pp.237-238.



- (2) The logic of Warfield's stance with regard to the Phenomena of Scripture he states:

"... we approach the study of the so called 'phenomena' of the Scriptures with a very strong presumption that these Scriptures contain no errors, and than any 'phenomena' apparently inconsistent with their inerrancy are so in appearance only."<sup>1</sup>

That is, Warfield's presumption is based on the weight of evidence that the New Testament writers are trustworthy as teachers of doctrine. Now Warfield admits that it seems plausible not to accept a doctrine of Inspiration until criticism and exegesis have said all they want to about the structure, text and characteristics of the Scriptures, but nevertheless he feels if the weight of evidence re. the trustworthiness of the Apostles is so great, we must yield to it, in spite of the difficulties as Christians do when they affirm say, The Trinity or man's depravity or the Love of God, before the difficulties are removed.

He admits that there might be an apriori possibility that a comparison of the phenomena of Scripture with the doctrine of Scripture may produce glaring inconsistencies. He has no objection to the Bible doctrine being tested.

"By all means let the doctrine of the Bible be tested by the facts and let the test be made all the more, not the less stringent and penetrating because of the great issues that hang upon it."<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., Real Problem of Inspiration, op.cit., p.215.
  2. Ibid., p.217.

But in such careful and sensitive testing it is to be comparable to the demands for stringent proof as when it is claimed that a close friend has uttered a malicious lie. Warfield cannot hide his 'sentimental presumption' against the notion that the phenomena ~~is~~ inconsistent with the teaching. This presumption he believes is rational. The evidence for it is 'probable' not demonstrative. It leaves open the metaphysical possibility of its being mistaken. He does not have therefore, "Apodeictic certainty of the Bible's infallibility".<sup>1</sup> But the evidence remains in that any evidence to the contrary must be greater than the mass of evidence for the Bible's trustworthiness. Warfield reminds those who approach the phenomena that there is to be no strained exegesis, that to remember that their exegesis is not infallible, that the exegete is not the measure of truth and therefore his inability to harmonise the phenomena does not necessarily mean error. With Warfield's approach an unharmonisable passage is not an objection to plenary inspiration but is merely a passage difficult to harmonise. These problem areas, he believes are 'trivial', 'only apparent' are progressively vanishing in quantity and constitute no strain to faith. For Warfield these difficulties will receive their explanation with the advance of knowledge.

Warfield's method of examining the phenomena in the light of the doctrine of Scripture he believes to be necessary because of the weight of evidence in favour of his view of Scripture. If one uses the alternative method of comprehensive induction of phenomena and teaching with all the facts being co-factors, then at best a degree of accuracy for the Scriptures would be indicated. But even in using such a method:

---

1. Ibid., p.219.

"it is inevitable that the relative weight of the evidence for the trustworthiness of the two sets of facts should be the deciding factor in determining the truth."<sup>1</sup>

So the asserted facts of performance must give way to the teaching facts unless the evidence on which the former is based as true outweighs the evidence of the latter. This means in practice resorting to Warfield's method.

"The real question, in a word is . . . whether the basis of our doctrine is to be what The Bible teaches, or what men teach. And this is a question to be settled on the old method, viz. on our estimate of the weight and value of the evidence which places the Bible in our hands as a teacher of doctrine."<sup>2</sup>

(3) How then in practical terms does Warfield deal with the phenomena of Scripture, which is an apparent threat to his affirmation of the infallibility of Scripture.

(i) Errors

As Warfield considers the question of errors and contradictions in the Bible, there are four factors he would want us to remember. The first is that errorless infallibility is to be ascribed only to the originally inspired autographic text. Of this we shall have more to say shortly. Second, his view is not that of a mechanical view of inspiration, the Bible is very much the word of Man, full of human influence in terms of style and language but not in a manner inconsistent with truthfulness and accuracy. Third, the purpose of inspiration is the accurate conveyance of truth.

---

1. Ibid., p.224.

2. Ibid., p.226.



"No objection therefore, is valid against the form in which the truth is expressed, so long as it is admitted that that form conveys the truth."<sup>1</sup>

"No objection touches the question, that is obtained by pressing the primary sense of phrases or idioms. These are often false ; but they are a necessary part of human speech. And the Holy Ghost in using human speech, used it as he found it. It cannot be argued then that the Holy Spirit could not speak of the sun setting, or call the Roman world 'the whole world'. The current sense of a phrase is alone to be considered ; and if men so spoke and were understood correctly in so speaking, the Holy Ghost speaking their speech would also so speak."<sup>2</sup>

Fourth, the intentions and professions of the writers are paramount, e.g. if the writers are not claiming to quote the Old Testament verbatim, then there can be no objection if they do not quote the exact words. If the writers are not claiming to quote the exact words of Jesus then the fact that there are diverse accounts of the sayings of Christ in the Gospels is no objection.

Taking into consideration these four factors, Warfield asks for some proof of errors. He claims that we apply these principles to profane writers

". . . it is a first principle of historical science that any solution which affords a possible method of harmonising any two statements is preferable to the assumption of

- 
1. Warfield and Hodge, 'Inspiration', op.cit., p.245.
  2. Warfield, B.B., 'Inspiration and Criticism', op.cit., p.438.

inaccuracy or error - whether those statements are found in the same or different writers."<sup>1</sup>

There are, claims Warfield, only three instances where the writers of the New Testament are in disharmony with the profane writers of the time or other historical sources ; the statements regarding the taxing under Quirinius, the revolt under Theudas, and the Lordship of Aretas over Damascus. In reply Warfield uses the proof of the historian 'Zumpt' to indicate that Quirinius was twice governor of Syria, the first time just after the Birth of Jesus. Since Josephus speaks of 10,000 revolts not recorded by him it is possible says Warfield that Theudas' revolt was one of these. The Lordship of Aretas over Damascus is rendered very probable, he argues, because of what we know concerning the posture of affairs at that time in that region.

"Even were the New Testament writers in direct conflict in these or in other statements, with profane sources, it would still not be proven that the New Testament was in error."<sup>2</sup>

Warfield uses the same type of arguments to indicate geographical accuracy.

(ii) The fact that quotations from the Old Testament found in the New Testament are at times altered or in their being quoted from the Septuagint at variance in form from the Hebrew, might appear to be a phenomena inconsistent with Warfield's view of Verbal Inspiration and infallibility.

---

1. Ibid., p.439.

2. Ibid., p.440.

Such a change, argues Warfield, would only be valid if the New Testament writers were falsifying the Old in their quotations. Infallibility and Verbal Inspiration is to do with 'truth', not verbal inerrancy.

"The doctrine of verbal or plenary inspiration (for these are but two names for the same thing) does not assert a 'verbal inerrancy' but a real inerrancy; it does not imply that the quotation should be found verbally accurate, but really to the point. It asserts, not exactness but truth in every scriptural statement."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield therefore concedes:

"There is always an element of application in quotations; and it is, therefore, proper in quotation to so alter the form of the original as to bring out clearly its bearing on the one subject in hand, thus throwing the stress on the element in it for which it is cited."<sup>2</sup>

He therefore sees deviation from the original form, adaptation provided it is engaged in by true exegesis and neglected of context all permissible in the activity of quotation providing there is no falsifying of the truth. The manner, therefore in which the New Testament writers use the Old Testament including the Septuagint is therefore not a threat, for Warfield, to his infallible Scriptures.

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., The New Testament Use of the Septuagint and Inspiration, The Presbyterian Journal, Dec. 8, 1892, reprinted in Selected Shorter Writing, Vol.II, p.552.
  2. Warfield and Hodge 'Inspiration', op.cit., p.256.



" . . . inspiration secured only  
truth - not 'verbal inerrancy', but  
real truth . . ."<sup>1</sup>

(iii) Warfield's view of the infallibility of Scripture is again apparently challenged by the phenomena of a corrupt text which has been translated and subsequently incorporated into, e.g. the Authorised Version. His response is that that which has been inspired and therefore infallible are the original autographs.

"Everybody knows that no book was ever printed, much less hand-copied, into which some errors did not intrude in the process; and as we do not hold the authors responsible for these in an ordinary book, neither ought we to hold God responsible for them in this extraordinary book, which we call the Bible. It is the Bible that we declare to be 'of infallible truth' - the Bible that God gave us, not the corruptions and slips which scribes and printers have given us, some of which are in every copy."<sup>2</sup>

He would therefore wish to argue that many, though by no means all, of the difficulties and apparent discrepancies may be due to textual corruption. This he maintains is not an argument peculiar to himself or to his age.

"Are we to believe that no man until our wonderful nineteenth century, ever had acumen enough to detect a printer's error or to realise the liability of hand-copied manuscripts to occasional corruption?"<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Warfield, New Testament Use of the Septuagint and Inspiration, op.cit., p.559.
  2. Warfield, The Inerrancy of the Original Autographs, The Independent, March 23, 1893, reprinted in Selected Shorter Writings, Vol.II, p.580f.
  3. Ibid., p.585.

(iv) Warfield is also faced with the problem of the Canonicity of Scripture, i.e. the reconciling of his view of infallibility with the phenomena of the historical development of the canonicity of the Books of the Bible.

His approach must be seen over and against the Roman Catholic stance of the Church canonising and of what he considers to be the overly subjective argument from the self-authenticating nature of Scripture by the Testimonium Spiritus Sancti. His position is objective, rational and historical. He would want to make seven points in this regard.<sup>1</sup>

- (i) The Christian Church did not require to form for itself a canon of Scripture. This is inherited from the Jewish Church.
- (2) The Christian Church did not develop by a process of natural law. It was founded with authoritative teachers who carried with them the Old Testament Canon.
- (3) Equal authority was given to Apostles as Prophets. What they delivered was perceived as a divine revelation even to the very words (1 Cor. 2:13). The result was that such authoritative writings were placed alongside the Old Testament Canon and used as a part of worship.
- (4) The canon increasing in Early Church. Peter in A.D.68 accepts Paul's writings as Scripture. Paul combines as scripture Deuteronomy with the Gospel of Luke. What is important, says Warfield is that here is not a

"Gradually heightening estimate of the New Testament Books, originally received on a lower level and just

---

1. Warfield, B.B., The Formation of the Canon of the New Testament, American Sunday School Union, Philadelphia, P.A., 1892, reprinted in Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, op.cit., Appendix I.

beginning to be tentatively accounted Scripture; they are conclusive evidences rather of the estimation of the New Testament Books from the very beginning as Scripture, and of this attachment as Scripture to the other Scriptures already in hand."<sup>1</sup>

- (5) The Bible was from an early stage in Christendom called 'the law, prophets, Gospels and Apostles'. From the beginning of the second century a collection of new books was accepted as part of the oracles of God. The number of books included is difficult to tell from the fragments. The collection probably includes all the books now canonised in the Protestant Bible with the exception of Jude, II, and III John and Philemon.
- (6) For Warfield the canon was completed about A.D. 98, when the last authoritative book was written. All the books were not universally accepted until later.

". . . in every case the principle on which a book was accepted, or doubts against it laid aside, was the historical tradition of apostolicity."<sup>2</sup>

- (7) The principle of canonicity was not Apostolic authorship but that which the Apostles had imposed upon the Church as law.

"The Early Churches, in short, received, as we receive, into their New Testament all the books historically evinced to them as given by the Apostles to the Churches as their code of law; and we must not mistake the historical evidences of the slow circulation and authentication of these books over the widely-extended Church, for evidence of slowness of 'canonization' of books by the authority or the taste of the Church itself."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Ibid., p.412.
  2. Ibid., p.413.
  3. Ibid., p.414.



(IV) A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO THE SCRIPTURES

The Nineteenth Century saw a rapid development of the Scientific Method not least in its application to the study of the Bible. It was out of this 'Critical' analysis that Warfield's stance came under such severe assault. How did he reconcile the developing critical method with his views of Biblical infallibility? How did he interact with those who espoused them and were willing to reject his high view of Scripture?

Much of what we have said already touches on this theme but we will highlight his stance under five headings. First, his general attitude to new insights gleaned from the progress of the Nineteenth Century; Second, his response to and use of the tools of Science re. the Bible; Third, the anti-supernatural bias he often perceived in those who used the critical apparatus; Fourth, the emergence of unreasoning mysticism to defend the Christian faith once the area of reason had been allowed to remove the grounds of faith; and fifth, the manner in which the Scriptures were perceived by believers who had through the insights of Scientific Criticism come to reject his view of Biblical Infallibility.

- (1) Warfield did not minimise the attainment of his age. He saw the nineteenth century re. Biblical Knowledge, perfecting "the lines of labour successfully inaugurated in the preceding periods."<sup>1</sup>

Similarly with respect to the text of Scripture he applauds those like Baur, Delitzch and Ginsburg who in the Old Testament had improved on the Masoretic studies. He is particularly approving of the work of Westcott and Hort

---

1. Warfield, B.B., 'The Century's Progress in Biblical Knowledge', Homiletic Review, March, 1900, pp.195-202, reprinted in S.S.W. II, p.4.

in their New Testament studies, whose labours resulted in him having:

"a better New Testament text in our hands, than has been currently read since the opening years of the second century."<sup>1</sup>

Similarly in the grammatical and lexical spheres he applauds the advances particularly in details. In the department of Archaeology, he sees that "the spade has become the interpreter of Scripture".<sup>2</sup>

As might be expected his reservations are strong when it comes to what he calls:

"a new form of critical assault upon the documentary origines of the Christian religion."<sup>3</sup>

His criticisms of this movement we will consider shortly but it is necessary to say that his attitude is not one of blanket condemnation.

"There is no student of the New Testament who will not confess deep indebtedness to the works of Baur, for example, both for facts in abundance and for generalisations and points of view of the most stimulating character; and though the lesser balance of many of Baur's followers has rendered their labours less helpful, yet the contribution made by the Tübingen school and its successors to the knowledge of the Scriptural deposit is nothing less than immense. And the same is true of

1. Ibid., p.5.

2. Ibid., p.6.

3. Ibid., p.6.

their own measure of the Old Testament scholars who have prosecuted their work under the spell of the new construction of the history of the religion of Israel and its record in the Old Testament books - from Graf and Reuss to Kuenen and Wellhausen and Stade."<sup>1</sup>

The positive effect, for Warfield, of this turmoil in Biblical Studies, has been to increase the quality and output of exegetical studies and with it distinctive theological results including the discipline of "Biblical Theology" of which he is approving.

Warfield's objections are therefore not with the Scientific Method, per se. In fact this he was happy to utilise.

(2) Warfield's use of the Sciences to aid his Biblical Knowledge is particularly to the fore in his advocacy of textual criticism but not exclusively so. He accepted that his was "an age of investigation . . . an age of criticism."<sup>2</sup>

He believed too that such thinking must affect our understanding.

"In any age of intellectual activity and rapid growth of Knowledge, like our own, a continuous process of adjustment is necessary between our mental inheritance and our constantly increasing acquisition."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.9.

2. Warfield, B.B., 'Christian Evidences; How Affected by Recent Criticisms', Homiletic Review, Aug. 1888, pp.107-112, reprinted in Selected Shorter Writings, VII, p.124.

3. Ibid., p.124.



He therefore accepts the rights of criticism as an instrument by which truth is assessed including the truth of the Bible.

"So far from the Bible being less subject to criticism than other books, we are bound to submit its unique claims to a criticism of unique rigor. Criticism is the mode of procedure by which we assure ourselves that it is what it claims to be."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield therefore claims to have no problems with the Method only the conclusions which results from:

". . . the ineradicable tendency of man to confound the right of criticism with the rightness of his own criticism."<sup>2</sup>

One of the first publications of Warfield was

→ "An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, (W.R. Nicholl, ed., The Theological Educator), London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1886" His motivation was partly, to as far as possible, discover the inspired and infallible autographa.

"The autographic text of the New Testament is distinctly within the reach of criticism in so immensely the greater part of the volumes, that we cannot despair of restoring to ourselves and the Church of God, His Book, word for word, as he gave it by inspiration to men."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., 'The Rights of Criticism and of the Church', The Presbyterian, April 13th, 1892, pp.7-8, reprinted Selected Shorter Writings, Vol.II, p.595.
  2. Ibid., p.596.
  3. Ibid., p.15.

T.P.L.

He therefore pursues with vigor the skills of the textual critic, who is seeking not to assess the sense, correctness or value of a work but to discover

" . . . the web of words, which constitutes the concrete thing by which a book is made a work."<sup>1</sup>

What he is seeking for therefore with the use of Scientific tools is the ipsissima verba of the author which may not lie in the documents before you or in any document, but which is nevertheless for him a legitimate object of search.

"The art of textual criticism is thus seen to be the art of detecting and emending errors in documents. The science is the orderly discussion and systematisation of the principles on which this art ought to proceed."<sup>2</sup>

Warfield feels free to gather internal and external evidence (i.e. a consideration of what the author is likely to have written and a comparison of copies) to overcome the difficulties. The application of these principles enables the author to discover what is corruption and what is correct. Warfield argues, in fact that if we have the right to use such a method re. secular books then it would be wrong not to use it re. a sacred book. But one might imagine that this would affect his view of biblical infallibility, but he reasons not:

" . . . nor is textual error to be thought to be commensurable with error in sense. The text conveys the sense; but the textual critic has nothing to do,

---

1. Ibid., p.2.

2. Ibid., p.7.

primarily, with a sense . . .  
divergences which leave the sense  
wholly unaffected may be to him  
very substantial errors."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, Warfield will not admit substantial corruption in the text. He considers what has been preserved and available to us until now is a "competently exact text of Scripture."<sup>2</sup>

Of the 200,000 'various readings', he concurs with Ezra Abbot that 19/20th have little support and are not really rival readings and that 19/20th of the remainder are of little importance and cause no appreciable difference in the sense of the passage where they occur. So that with Hort he sees the variations as trivial and not affecting an article of faith or a moral precept.

After setting out in detail the whole range of critical technique to be deployed in this science, he concludes:

"The first rule for the application of these methods, therefore, is to apply them all. Let no one be slighted; let each be used carefully and independently, and the results obtained by each carefully compared together. When the findings of the various methods agree the conclusion is certain, and we may feel sure that we have obtained the autographic text."<sup>3</sup>

(3) Warfield's reservations and criticisms of the Scientific approach to the Bible, was he claimed, based on a rejection not of the method but of the presuppositions and therefore world-view within which most nineteenth century

---

1. Ibid., p.11.

2. Ibid., p.12.

3. Ibid., p.183.



scientists were making their judgment. They had, he believed, succumbed to the influences of their culture and in particular, the growing anti-supernatural bias.

" . . . it cannot be denied that we are to-day in the midst of a very strong drift away from frank recognition of the supernatural as a factor in human life."<sup>1</sup>

It is impossible, he says, that Christian thought should remain unaffected by such a powerful trend.

" . . . immersed in an anti-supernaturalistic world-atmosphere, Christian thinking tends to become as anti-supernaturalistic as is possible to it. And it is indisputable that this is the characteristic of the Christian thought of our day."<sup>2</sup>

This, he says, is particularly evident in the attitude towards miracles in the biblical witness. Many engaged in allegedly aposteriori and openly scientific examination of the biblical data, do have an implicit apriori denial of the possibility of a miracle. He seeks to give many instances of this. One I shall use to illustrate his argument.

In the article on 'Gospels' in the "Encyclopaedia Biblica" he instances Paul Schmiedel<sup>1</sup> who while discussing the 'miracle-narratives' states that it would be clearly wrong to start from any axiom that 'miracles' are impossible.

---

1. Warfield, B.B., Christian Supernaturalism. The Presbyterian and Reformed Review, Vol.8, 1897, reprinted in Biblical and Theological Studies, The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Philadelphia, 1952, p.3.

2. Ibid., p.5.

Yet when confronted with a case of alleged miracle, e.g. Lk.23:44, an eclipse of the Sun, Schmiedel states:

"That this is a Celestial phenomena which, however, is possible only at the period of New Moon - that is, shortly before the first of Nisan - and cannot happen on the 15th or 14th of a month' . . . ~~That is to say~~ That is to say, we must without ado pronounce a darkening of the Sun 'impossible' unless it occurred at the time of the month when such things can happen naturally. A 'miracle' in other words is 'impossible'."1

Warfield sees the roots of this anti-supernatural bias, in Deism which would allow nothing added to the Christian faith except that which was already present in natural religion; Pautheism, which had become immersed in the late nineteenth century evolutionary thought, in which

". . . there is no such distinction possible as that between the natural and the supernatural: to it all things are natural, the necessary product of the blind interaction of the forces inherent in what we call matter. . ."2

and the idealism which followed Kant

". . . in the enthusiasm of reaction from the bald rationalism of the preceding page, the new culture came near to having an eye and capacity for nothing but 'ideas'. The historical elements of Christianity ceased to interest men; the 'ideas' alone attracted them."3

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., 'The Question of Miracles', The Bible Student, Mar. 1903, pp.121-126; Apr. 1903, pp.193-197; May 1903, pp.243-250; June 1903, pp.314-20, reprinted in Selected Shorter Writings, Vol.II, pp.176-177.
  2. Warfield, B.B., 'Christian Supernaturalism,' op.cit., p.4.
  3. Warfield, B.B., 'How to get rid of Christianity', The Bible Student, Vol.I, 1900, pp.121-127, reprinted Selected Shorter Writings, Vol.I, pp.53-54.



These philosophical roots produced what Warfield often refers to as the Kernel and Husk approach to Critical Analysis, i.e. the efforts of critics to remove the husks of those elements, e.g. the Supernatural or Theological, which were unacceptable to their world-view in order to get at 'the Kernel' of pure Christianity which they found palatable. The Ritschlian school comes under severe assault.

"For under its high-sounding proposal to cleanse Christianity of metaphysical accretions, precisely what Ritschlism essays is to reduce Christianity to a content against which a naturalistic philosophy, an unbelieving science, and a skeptical history cannot manage to raise objection."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield sees that what is at stake for him is not only a supernatural religion but the historicity of his religion and in particular the authentic history of Jesus which for many of his contemporaries was irrelevant to the affirmation of 'the Christian faith'.

In order for Warfield to use the Critical apparatus within his framework of a Supernatural God intervening in history of which the Bible is an authentic witness, he must, first seek to refute Lessing's claim that the external truths of reason are not dependent upon the accidental truths of history and second, demonstrate how the Biblical record is able to stand up to Critical Analysis and yet preserve its Supernatural element.

Concerning the first, Warfield draws upon Butler's 'Analogy' with its initial insistence upon probability as

---

1. Warfield, B.B., 'The Ritschlian School', The New York Observer, Feb. 24, 1898, reprinted in Selected Shorter Writings, Vol.II, pp.449/450.



a guide of life, and its proofs for the reasonableness of an historical revelation.

He challenges the assumption that historical facts cannot rise above probabilities by pointing out two senses of the word 'probable'.

"As the opposite of 'demonstrative', 'probable' refers to the nature of the ground on which the judgment of truth or reality rests; as the opposite of 'certain' it refers to the measure of assurance which the grounds on which this judgment rests are adequate to produce. Historical fact may be 'only probable' in the one usage and yet not less than 'certain' in the other."<sup>1</sup>

For Warfield, there is nothing more certain than matters of fact, because:

"What is, certainly is; and the certainty of demonstration cannot be more sure than the certainty of experience."<sup>2</sup>

Whether one comes to the conclusion that two plus two equal four by apriori demonstrative reasoning or by aposteriori experience, one is equally sure in both instances.

"The ground of certainty in both cases is my confidence in my faculties."<sup>3</sup>

The fact that history deals with past experience does not, Warfield argues, minimise the fact that an event

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., 'Christless Christianity', Harvard Theological Review, Vol.V, 1912, reprinted in Christology and Criticism, New York: Oxford, 1929, Vol.V, p.342.
  2. Ibid., p.342.
  3. Ibid., p.342.

has occurred. The time of its occurrence whether now or before now, he sees as irrelevant.

We do not know the present in all of its details, or in any of its details perfectly. Nevertheless, he reasons, "we can yet know truly where we can know only in part."<sup>1</sup> So therefore, because we do not know all the past, he thinks it invalid that we can know nothing that is past.

"There are occurrences which stand out so brightly against the enveloping darkness, which have wrought so powerfully on the course of events that have succeeded them . . . that we might as well pretend not to be able to see the sun in the heavens as not to be able to perceive them looming in the past, however distant."<sup>2</sup>

Those who do not see such things, he considers to be blind.

Look at the evidence regarding the Christian religion, challenges Warfield; does it not compel us to place it in this category?<sup>?</sup> And here Warfield is thinking not only of the documentary witness, which is subject to 'criticism', but the witness of Christianity itself to the nature of its origins and the effect of Christianity upon the world for over 2,000 years. This does not remove from Warfield the need to consider the fruits of the historical critical method.

"We are not fleeing from the results of historical criticism to take refuge in the argument from effects. We shall

---

1. Ibid., p.343.

2. Ibid., p.344.

appeal, indeed, from a naturalistically biased to an unbiased historical criticism; but we shall have no difficulty in trusting the latter to give us not only an actual Jesus, but a Supernatural Christ, and in him a Supernatural redemption."<sup>1</sup>

It is essential therefore for Warfield that he be able to demonstrate that the Jesus of dogma, the Jesus of the Bible and the Jesus of history be the same. This is the second task before him if he is to indicate his use of the critical method within a Supernatural framework.

Warfield's position is essentially, that the phenomena of the Biblical witness can only be explained on the basis of their authenticity.

"This evidence consists, it may be briefly said, not only in detailed and formal accounts of extraordinary occurrences narrated with a sanity and sobriety, a combined restraint and confidence, which is unique in all the literature of marvels. It includes also numerous incidental allusions to the occurrence of such events, as notorious matters of facts, such as implicate the whole community in the testimony in the most natural and convincing way. And it includes further historical sequences from these events such as interweave them so into the very fabric of all subsequent history, that history becomes inexplicable save on the assumption of their actual occurrence."<sup>2</sup>

Take the Temptations, as an example, says Warfield: they just turn on the assumption of Jesus' power to work

---

1. Ibid., p.346.

2. Warfield, B.B., 'The Question of Miracles', op.cit., p.186.



miracles, and are wholly inexplicable if he performed none and at any rate the whole character of the narrative's negates any hypothesis of invention. In fact, for Warfield, the whole of the Gospel narratives give evidence which cannot be set aside on any critical hypothesis of the origin of the Gospels, for the narratives are part and parcel of the sources that lie behind the Gospels, whatever those sources be and whatever the theory of composition. Ur-Marcus, the Matthean Logia, the special sources of Luke;

"They all give us not only a miracle - working Jesus, but a Jesus whose miracle-working is an essential element in his manifestation, and yet whose miracle-working is of a sort peculiar in its restraint and fitness to himself."<sup>1</sup>

The position of those critics who question the authenticity of these witnesses is from an apriori assumption of the impossibility of the Supernatural, contends Warfield.

(4) Warfield, is particularly concerned with those who are theologically akin to him but have accepted many of the insights of the critical school and therefore have removed from their faith, 'the external authority', of an infallible Bible. Christians, he recognises will not boldly embrace rationalism and use naked reason as the source of their truth.

---

1. Ibid., p.187.

"We hear it more commonly called,  
'the Christian consciousness', 'the  
witness of the Spirit in the heart',  
'the indwelling spirit . . .'"<sup>1</sup>

He sees this as a form of Mysticism. A mystic  
is one who:

"tends . . . to subordinate the  
expressly revealed Word as the less  
direct and convincing source of  
Knowledge of God to his own religious  
experience."<sup>2</sup>

Warfield sees this emerging in e.g. the writings  
of James Denney the Scottish Theologian, who he believes  
in order to avoid the implications of accepting the  
critical insights for his view of Biblical Authority,  
removes the objective criteria for their trustworthiness  
and seeks immediately to accept them for their religious  
value. Referring to Denney, Warfield says:

". . . Even he at the end sets forth  
a 'doctrine of holy Scripture' which  
evaporates its authority, which speaks  
of it as 'in the first instance'  
merely 'a means of grace' and as only  
secondarily, through the medium of the  
new life quickened in the heart, becoming  
a source of Knowledge, because forsooth,  
'no religious truth, no spiritual truth,  
can be communicated,' 'by telling it in  
so many words'. Thus he, too, throws  
back the spirit upon itself, under the  
euphemism of 'the witness of the Spirit  
in the heart', for the source and test  
of all truth."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., Recent Reconstruction of Theology; The Homiletic Review, March 1898, reprinted in Selected Shorter Writings, Vol.II, p.291.
  2. Warfield, B.B., 'Mysticism and Christianity', Biblical Review, Vol.II, 1917, reprinted in Studies in Theology, New York, Oxford, 1932, pp.654/655.
  3. Warfield, B.B., Recent Reconstruction of Theology, op.cit., p.293.

It is, says Warfield, unsatisfactory to set forth a body of Christian Knowledge on the basis of religious experience without first establishing the sources of that Knowledge (i.e. the Scriptures) and investigating their trustworthiness. Warfield is not seeking to play down the religious dimension of Christian truth, merely that it must have some objective validity and verification.

It is, therefore for Warfield, ungrounded mysticism that would cause a Robertson-Smith or a James Denney to embrace the Bible as the Word of God because it fulfills a religious function in declaring redemption in Christ and bearing witness authentically to it in our heart.

"This palinary argument assures us unassailably that God speaks to us in Scripture; but it does not by itself assure us that the Bible itself is God's word. If we stop with it and seek no further evidence of the Authority of Scripture as a source of Knowledge of Divine truth, we shall be very apt to find ourselves after a while evaporating the authority of the Scriptures altogether and substituting for it the Authority of the Holy Ghost in the heart, by which alone the authority of the Scriptural word is validated for us."<sup>1</sup>

(5) Warfield was particularly concerned for the implications for Biblical Authority in the Reformed Churches at the accepting of the critical conclusions of Biblical Scholarship. He believed it produced an undermining of external Authority.

---

1. Warfield, B.B., 'A Review of Studies in Theology' by James Denny, Christian Literature, Oct. 1895, reprinted in Selected Shorter Writings, Vol.II, pp.306/307.



"It begins by rejecting the authority of the Bible for minor matters only - in the minima in 'circumstantials' and 'by-passages' and 'incidental remarks', and the like. The next stop is to reject its authority for everything except 'matters of faith and practice'. Then comes unwillingness to bow to all its doctrinal deliverances and ethical precepts . . . Then the circle is completed by setting aside the whole Bible as authority; perchance with the remark, so far as the New Testament is concerned, that in the Apostolic age men depended each on the Spirit in his own heart . . ."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield saw those who had accepted a lower view of Scripture than his own seeking to justify their position and over and against which he sought to clarify his view.

There were men like the scholar, Richard Rothe, who sought to set Christ in contrast with the Apostles in their view of Scriptures. He had sought to demonstrate that the extreme statements of Paul were not used by Christ and that Christ gave some hints that he did not share this common view. For Warfield, such an approach not only undermines confidence in the New Testament writers, but also in Christ himself, on the basis that we have no Christ except that borne witness to by the Apostles. His credit is therefore involved in theirs.

Others saw the New Testament writers accommodating their views to the prejudices of the Jews. But to do this it is necessary, claims Warfield, to prove that the Apostles did not share these views and that they

---

1. Warfield, B.B., The Latest Phase of Historical Rationalism, The Presbyterian Quarterly, Vol.IX, 1895, reprinted in Studies in Theology, op.cit., p.589.

accommodated their views to them. To present such proofs we would be constantly seeking for the novel in the writings of the Apostles and once again, says Warfield, we would be thrown back upon ourselves to separate the truth from the false which could be an exercise as merely distinguishing in the text what we would or would not accept. Such a view also, he believed, impeaches the New Testament writers with being lacking in either knowledge or veracity.

A further position is to distinguish the teaching of the Apostles from their opinion. He quotes F.W. Farrar as an example, who reasoned that the Apostles may have held this view of Scripture espoused by Warfield but since they did not explicitly teach it, we are therefore not bound by it. In response, Warfield argues that Paul does teach it, in e.g. 2 Timothy 3:16; that we have no sources to decide between what was their opinion and what was their teaching; and that such a rule would turn biblical teaching on its head and reduce it from a body of principles inculcated by examples into a mere congeries of instances. The effect again is to discredit the New Testament writers.

The fourth approach which sought to justify a lower view of Scripture is that we already mentioned in examining Warfield's attitude to the Phenomena of Scripture. It is the attitude which seeks to set the facts over and against the teaching. He sees it as:

" . . . the effort to modify the teaching of Scripture as to its own inspiration by an appeal to the observed characteristics of Scripture, is an attempt not to obtain a clearer knowledge of what the Scriptures teach, but to correct that teaching."<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Warfield, B.B., The Real Problem of Inspiration, op.cit., p.204.



Warfield's response to this has already been outlined, namely that the facts cannot be used to correct the doctrine of Scripture. He sees the accepting of such an approach unhelpful.

"... the attempt to make the facts of Scripture co-factors of equal rank with the teaching of Scripture in ascertaining the true doctrine of inspiration, is really an attempt to modify the doctrine taught by Scripture by an appeal to the facts, while concealing from ourselves the fact that we have modified it, and in modifying corrected it, and, of course, in correcting it, discredited Scripture as a teacher of doctrine."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield's most careful analysis of a position which sought to justify a lower view of Scripture was that of Henry Preserved Smith, a renegade from Warfield's stance and one who had become an ally of Charles Briggs in his trial for heresy.<sup>2</sup>

Smith admitted that there were errors in Scripture outside the spheres of doctrine and precept. Warfield, therefore sees him, out of necessity, limiting his view of the Inspiration of the Scriptures. Smith had stated his views in 'Inspiration and Inerrancy'.<sup>3</sup> Smith seeks to distinguish between the Biblical and Theological idea of inspiration. As far as the Biblical idea is concerned (and here he does not mean its usage, says Warfield); inspiration

---

1. Ibid., p.207.

2. Warfield, B.B., Limited Inspiration, Presbyterian and Reformed Review, Jan. 1894, under title of 'Prof. Henry Preserved Smith on Inspiration', reprinted in Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Philadelphia, P.A., 1962.

3. Smith, H.P., 'Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration', essay in 'Inspiration and Inerrancy', James Clarke & Co., London, 1891, p.195ff.



refers to the method of revelation and is confined to the recipients of that revelation. Nowhere, he maintains, is such inspiration ascribed to the writers.

Warfield contends that Smith means three things by this. First, on the surface he would appear to believe that there is no biblical ground for holding that the writers who composed Scripture were inspired. When Smith examines men under the Inspiration of God he sees them as being directly affected by the Holy Spirit; therefore he questions that there is biblical evidence to argue that the Scriptures are uniquely under the Spirit's control. Smith exegetes 2 Timothy 3:16, making *θεοπνευστος* to mean breathing out God, i.e. a quality rather than an indication of the origin of Scripture. Although he will permit the Old Testament to be described as God-breathed in so far as it is accomplishing its purpose of making us wise unto salvation. For Warfield therefore, Smith is distinguishing between revelation in Scripture and Scripture as a whole.

Second, Smith seems to equate the writers of Scripture with the Amanuensis, e.g. Baruch for Jeremiah. His contention is that the Amanuensis was not an organ of revelation and was therefore not inspired.

Third, and following his second observation, Warfield seems to think that Smith is arguing that the biblical proof for inspiration extends only to those books which were written by 'organs of revelation', for example, the Book of Ezekiel or the Epistles of Paul. Even then, inspiration does not safeguard the delivery of the message, for he quotes Peter to try to indicate that such is limited to the Prophetic element.

For Warfield, Smith's emphasis on the Biblical idea of Inspiration, is that it refers to 'the organs of revelation' not to 'the Scriptures'.

Smith recognises that often what Theologians call inspiration and the Bible's idea of inspiration may not be the same thing. He therefore considers separately, the former. This theological idea, he grants, applies to writers by which they are led to collect, choose and arrange their material, with the effect of making the Bible in its totality the Church's permanent and infallible rule of faith and life. Smith therefore accepts that inspiration (theologically conceived) extends to all of Scripture but in doing so questions the extent of the Holy Spirit's activity with respect to inspiration. Smith, for Warfield, seeks therefore not to make partial but to limit inspiration. This inspiration accounts for the Unity of the Bible and makes it an infallible rule of faith. He compares it to an inner divine process like Sanctification which does not make the recipients free from error but nevertheless enables them to accomplish God's purpose. Smith argues that this inspiration does not preserve the record from scientific and historical mistakes but preserves it from error re areas of faith and morals. To put it more succinctly the Bible's purpose is for religious edification, scientifically and historically it may be false but in so far as it discloses God and His will it is revelation and therefore infallible.

Warfield is concerned that Smith does not handle adequately those passages of Scripture which affirm their own trustworthiness. Are they, asks Warfield, in error when they speak of themselves?<sup>7</sup> By neglecting these statements, Warfield sees Smith as offering little proof for the positive side of his theory. Smith does concede, says Warfield, that the inspiration of the Scribe, may be

faintly taught. Nevertheless he leans heavily on the Testimonium Spiritus Sancti, which bears witness in the heart of the believer with respect to Sin, Law and Grace, as the ground of his appeal. For Warfield, in spite of Smith's claims to be scientific, his position is indefensible following the procedure by induction from the facts. Are the Psalms infallible, asks Warfield, in their morality expressed in the imprecatory Psalms? He knows that Smith's answer is 'No'.

Warfield, therefore, concludes that Smith may not speak of the Scriptures (being limited in their inspiration) as 'Revelation' or 'the Word of God' but only as containing the Word of God.

"This word of God, or revelation, in the Scriptures he sometimes seems to identify with its whole religious contents, sometimes with the words formally attributed in the Scriptures to God as the speaker."<sup>1</sup>

## V. WARFIELD'S USE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

This is the last section of our analysis of Warfield's use of the concept 'infallible'. The purpose of this section is to examine how he uses, what he terms infallible (i.e. the Scriptures) to see if further light can be thrown upon his meaning of the term.

First, we shall describe our method with the aid of David Kelsey and his book 'The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology'.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.92.

2. Kelsey, David H., The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1975.



Second, there will be a description of Warfield at work on the text, exegeting and applying passages specifically related to his understanding of the Scriptures/ witness to Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

How does Warfield actually use this infallible guide? How do the Scriptures function in practice as an authority for his theological position?

David Kelsey in his book (op.cit.) considers how seven theologians of differing theological positions, but who affirm Scriptural Authority, use Scripture. Warfield is one of the seven. As his starting point, he asks Warfield (with the other seven) four questions. We shall use Kelsey's questions, but give our own answers.

Question 1 : What aspect(s) of Scripture is (are) taken to be authoritative? Is it the concepts in Scripture, or the doctrines, or the historical reports, or the liturgical utterances or the 'symbols', or some combination of these or something else?

Answer: Kelsey sees, in Warfield, the content or the doctrines as being authoritative. It might be better to say, that for Warfield, all that is affirmed in Scripture is Authoritative.

Question 2 : What is it about this aspect of Scripture that makes it authoritative?

Answer: The fact that it has been 'inspired' (breathed out by God) so that all that Scripture affirms, God affirms.

Question 3 : What sort of logical force seems to be ascribed to the Scripture to which appeal is made? Has it the force of a descriptive report, of an injunction, of an emotive ejaculation; is it self-involving?

Answer: Warfield recognises that 'inspired Scripture' is logically dispensable for Christian faith, but the fact of Scripture being inspired means that it is methodologically indispensable for Christian faith.

Question 4 : How is the Scripture that is cited brought to bear on theological proposals so as to authorise them?

Answer: Although Warfield rejects a proof-texting method of doing theology, he nevertheless cites Scripture as direct authority for his theses.

In comparing Warfield with Briggs in their use of Scripture, Kelsey's comparative insights will be drawn upon again. At this stage it is important to consider what we are looking for in Warfield's exegesis and application. Our primary interest is in the logical connection between the conclusions Warfield reaches, with respect to Jesus Christ and the response this evokes within him, as he uses 'the Scriptures'.

The approach will be to examine Warfield's exegesis of Scripture under four categories. First, as he seeks to set his exegetical method over and against a more critical approach. Second, his handling of the text which he believes justifies his view of the deity of Christ. Third, his exegesis of those passages which might appear to contradict his Theology and fourth, Warfield's expository addresses on the same theme but of a more devotional nature. From this, the logical connections will be highlighted.

(i) In 1901, Paul W. Schmiedel, wrote an article on Gospels in the 'Encyclopaedia Biblica'. In it he continued the pursuit (popular at that time) for the

Historical Jesus. Warfield found this paper particularly objectionable and wrote a response.<sup>1</sup>

In Schmiedel's search for the 'real' Jesus behind the supernatural Jesus presented in the Gospel narratives, he considers the synoptic problem of sources too complex and derives to discuss the credibility of the Gospel narratives independent of the Synoptic problem. He considered that literary criticism had made no contribution to this search.

"No stratum of tradition has been reached by it in which the portrait of Jesus differs in any essential respect from that presented in the synoptic gospels."<sup>2</sup>

In his search, Schmiedel uses as his criterion of credibility, that it was impossible to invent the text. That in itself, is not objected to by Warfield, only because he considers Schmiedel to have an anti-supernaturalistic world-view. The difficulty then is that the passages where Jesus appears to be a divine being are found from the outset to be incredible:

"Either a purely human Jesus or no Jesus at all is the only alternative that he will admit."<sup>3</sup>

In Schmiedel's historical critical approach<sup>o</sup> to the text, he has <sup>two</sup> lines of procedure. Negatively, he seeks to remove anything that is incredible or untrustworthy. Positively, he seeks to discover those elements which are

- 
1. Warfield, B.B., Concerning Schmiedel's 'Pillar-Passages', Princeton Theological Review, Vol.XI, 1913, reprinted in Christology and Criticism, op.cit.
  2. Ibid., p.183.
  3. Ibid., p.186.



thrust upon him by the weight of tradition. According to Schmiedel there are five passages which meet with the positive requirements in the Gospels, that is, statements which are in conflict with the reverence for Jesus that prevades the Gospels and therefore could not have been invented by the authors of the Gospels. The five are:

Mk. 10:17f  
 Matt. 12:31f  
 Mk. 3:21f  
 Mk. 13:32  
 Mk. 15:34  
 Matt. 27:46.

He adds to these four which refer to Jesus's miracles:

Mk. 8:12  
 Mk. 6:5  
 Mk. 8:14-21  
 Matt. 11:5  
 Lk. 7:22

It is these which Schmiedel calls 'Pillar Passages' and are said to give us a truly scientific life of Jesus.

"Schmiedel is concerned accordingly to throw into emphasis the positive side of his method, and to make plain that he obtains by it not mere probability but certainty as to Jesus - both as to his existence and as to his true character."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield seeks to make the following criticisms:

- (a) Schmiedel's method is at variance with historians holding a similar world-view. He quotes Streadel to the effect that with his method, even the most mythical must have existed since followers attributed

---

1. Ibid., p.193.

to them human traits or Crote, who write that we may purge a narrative of impossibilities and not make a single step towards authenticating it.

(b) Warfield refutes any notion that the historicity of Jesus is in any sense dependent on Schmiedel's argument.

"In point of fact no one is more assured than Schmiedel that it is quite firmly established altogether apart from this argument."<sup>1</sup>

(c) Warfield, maintains that his is the true historical method. It is absurd, says Warfield, to treat the Synoptics as our sole source of our knowledge of Jesus and then to question the value of this source. Warfield contends for the early dating of the Synoptics, the consistency of their testimony and its corroboration by Paul and other pre A.D.70 sources.

"But precisely what we are complaining of is the impropriety of this method. It is in essence an attempt to ignore a fundamental fact, the fact that is, that the Synoptic Gospels do not stand off in isolation, and cannot be dealt with as if they were - or even as if they were only possible - a body of inventions; but are known to rest on a background of copious, consentient and contemporary historical tradition."<sup>2</sup>

(d) Schmiedel is said to be at variance with the methodology of his contemporary historians which was one "general deference to positive testimony."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.218.

2. Ibid., p.231.

3. Ibid., p.234.

There is, says Warfield, no indication of a general scepticism as is evident in Schmiedel.

" . . . it is safe to say no support can be found in the recognised practice of secular historians. It is in fact not an historical procedure which is proposed at all; it is pure anti-historism - a bold attempt to pour history into the mould of apriori construction."<sup>1</sup>

(e) The assumption of Schmiedel is that Jesus was human and not divine. Faith is therefore seen as a foe of the facts.

"The fact that the community believed Jesus to be divine is no proof that Jesus did not himself also believe that he was divine . . . . Because a man believes what he sees,<sup>2</sup> it does not make him untrustworthy."<sup>2</sup>

It is the method deployed by Schmiedel within his narrow framework of credibility that leads him to his erroneous conclusions. The Historical Method remains intact for the grammatico-historical exegesis employed by Warfield:

" . . . if the Supernatural Jesus is to be displaced from history, it is not on historical grounds that he can be displaced."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.235.

2. Ibid., p.248.

3. Ibid., p.255.



(2) Warfield would seek by scholarly exegesis to demonstrate from the text, the deity of Jesus Christ. This is particularly clear in his book 'Lord of Glory'.<sup>1</sup> For Warfield, the proper subject of the New Testament is Jesus Christ.

"Every page of it, or perhaps we might better say every line of it, has its place in the portrait which is drawn of him by the whole. In forming an estimate of the conception of his person entertained by its writers, and by those represented by them, we cannot neglect any part of its contents."<sup>2</sup>

The contents of Scripture, which Warfield proceeds to examine, is divided into what he calls primary and subsidiary evidence. By subsidiary evidence Warfield does not mean less convincing, but rather those elements in, say the Synoptics, which assume and do not affirm specifically what he is seeking to prove. He uses as illustration and example the designations which the New Testament writers apply to Jesus. He does this for two reasons. First, to acquire a sense of the attitude of the New Testament writers to the person of Jesus and second, to grasp a clearer notion of the loftiness of the estimate of these writers for Jesus, that is as a Divine person.

Warfield's emphasis in exegesis is upon the Synoptics and finds, he believes, three classes of designation; the designatory Jesus, the honorific Rabbi and the Messianic Christ.

He then proceeds to concentrate on Mark's Gospel and broadens his arrangement of designations under the

---

1. Warfield, B.B., 'Lord of Glory', American Tract Society, New York, 1907.

2. Ibid., p.1.

categories of : narrative designation - Jesus ; popular designation among his contemporaries - Jesus of Nazareth ; formula of address - Rabbi (this was used in the Aramaic by his disciples and in the Greek on more formal occasions.) At times the terms Rabbi and Lord become nearly synonymous ; Messianic designation - Jesus Christ, Christ, Anarthous Christ, Bridegroom and Shepherd ; Royal titles related to Messianic designations - Son of David, Son of God (when Jesus refers to himself he mostly uses the designation 'Son of Man' and therefore fills this Messianic concept with new meaning in that 'the Son of Man' is seen to be the Lowly One, the Suffering Servant who at the same time has Power and Authority).

What is Mark's concept of our Lord? asks Warfield. Mark reveals a Divine intervention in Christ. He sees the life of Christ thoroughly supernatural. Mark believes him to be the Messiah and allows his person to enhance his designations so that 'Lord' expands to supreme authority and 'Messiah' expands to Divine being himself. The evidence that Warfield wishes to draw upon to demonstrate his view is, he says, copious but subtle. They fall under seven categories:

- (i) In Mark 13:22. Jesus is seen to be a person superior to Angels. Here he admits ignorance of the time of the second coming but in so doing separates himself from the angels by claiming superiority to them. Already in Mark's Gospel, the angels had ministered to him 1:13 ; had been subordinate 8:38 and were later his servants 13:27.
- (ii) In the title 'Son of Man', according to Daniel 7, such a Messiah is not a mere man. Jesus is affirming his heavenly origin. This is in keeping with the Jewish references to Daniel 7 where they all agree that this a pre-existent heavenly monarch.



- (iii) Jesus earthly life is said to be a mission ; that is he had 'come' to earth 1:38, 2:17, 10:45. Warfield recognises that this does not involve pre-existence but that it is in common with it.
- (iv) Jesus performs the functions of God in the picture of 'the Son of Man', e.g. sitting in the clouds of Glory, 14:62 ; being in the glory of the Father with his Holy Angels 13:26 ; in the punishing of his enemies 8:36 ; in his claims to be Lord of the Sabbath; and in his right to forgive Sins.
- (v) Jesus' sonship is unique. In Mark 12:6 he is seen as God's one son and in 12:7 as the heir of God. In Mark 3:11 he is recognised by the evil spirits of Jesus as the Son of God. He is given the position of eternal Sonship in Mark 14:62 which causes the High Priest to accuse him of Blasphemy.

This unique sonship is, says Warfield, borne witness to in Mark by a variety of witnesses, e.g. Satanic forces of another world 1:24, 1:34, 3:11, 5:7 ; By a guardian of the spiritual life of Israel 14:61. By Jesus himself 12:6, 13:32, 14:62, By God in heaven 1:11, 9:7 ; and by a heathen centurion 15:30.

- (vi) Jesus is assimilated to Jehovah. This is implied in his designation of Bridegroom 2:19, 20, with reference to the Old Testament type as seen in e.g. Hosea. It is also evident in the sense Jesus put on Ps.110 quoted in Mark 12:35, where Jesus as the heir of David has the status of 'Lord'.
- (vii) Jesus is identified with Jehovah. Remembering that the designation Lord (Jehovah) is used in the LXX for God, the significance of the opening verses of Mark where the term is applied to Jesus cannot be missed.

How then does Mark bear witness to Jesus? His method, says Warfield, is not to reflect in his Gospel but to demonstrate in action who Jesus is. Mark sees in Jesus a Supernatural Person but he does not dwell on this. This



emerges in the narrative, almost by accident. He does not record e.g. the great saying of Jesus which declares that 'All authority is given unto me . . .' Instead he exhibits this authority in detail. Exegesis therefore for Warfield must have a strong element of inference. Warfield recognises that in many areas Mark is silent, but this, he contends is not due to ignorance. Pre-existence, he says, <sup>is</sup> implied in the title - 'Son of Man' and his supernatural birth is implied in his superangelic nature. There is therefore in Mark, says Warfield, not an underdeveloped Christology, but an unexpressed one.

Mark's recognition of Jesus deity does not cloud the centrality of Messiahship in his Gospel, argues Warfield. It rather deepens his conception of Messiahship in e.g. his view of the Kingdom of God rules by the Righteous Servant 10:45, 9:12, 14:21, 1:24 ; by the Divine Redeemer 1:3 and as well as the Danielic Son of Man.

Warfield now proceeds to expand his examination of the Gospels to an analysis of the Synoptics and their sources. He finds the Synoptical testimony significant in that what is recorded is not merely the individual opinions of three writers, but rather the consentient conviction of a community demonstrating the conception held about Jesus in the early Church. They were written, he maintains before 80 A.D. (his own view is before 70 A.D.). Since by the seventh decade, the early community believed Jesus a divine person, the question he raises is, could such a view have been radically perfected in a short 35 years? Look at the earlier documents, says Warfield. Here he considers synoptic sources to discover the conception of Jesus found in them. He accepts for argument sake the popular two source theory of an original Mark combined with Matthean sayings. What then is the Christology of a primitive Mark? It is impossible he says

to construct a primitive Mark without a Supernatural Jesus. For even if it is absurdly held that only what is common in all three Synoptic Gospels is primitive Mark - then we are still left with a Supernatural Jesus. He then proceeds to cite from such sources nineteen references to such a Jesus beginning with Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah 8:29, to him speaking of himself as Son of Man and in that capacity forgiving sins 14:20. Again, says Warfield, if passages are considered which are present in Mark and in one other evangelist, such may have had a place in the primitive documents underlying all three Synoptics. They too bear effective testimony to a Supernatural Jesus. In fragments peculiar to Matthew and Mark, Warfield recognises that he is not called 'Christ' at all, but gives copious references to where he calls himself 'the Son of Man' and as 'the Son'. In passages peculiar to Mark and Luke he is affirmed as Messiah and speaks of himself as 'the Son of Man'. Warfield again concludes that the primitive gospel bears testimony to Jesus as 'the Lord of Glory' no less than Mark. And what of the Christology of the primitive sayings - the logia? Warfield seeks to demonstrate from passages peculiar to Matthew and Luke that they present Jesus as a divine being, in that e.g. he is addressed as 'Lord', Matt. 8:8, Lk. 7:6, or is spoken to as 'the Son of God', Matt. 4:3,6, Lk. 4:39, or where Communion of Son with the Father is said to be unbroken, Matt. 11:27, Lk. 10:22.

Warfield is convinced that the documentary evidence both in terms of source and sayings testify to Jesus as a supernatural person. He then turns to Historical Criticism of the text wherein one is asked to distinguish not between earlier and later documentary strata but between narrative and reportial elements, So that one might distinguish between what Jesus thought and the faith of the Christian Community. If in a straightforward manner, says Warfield,

we were to set aside what Jesus says of himself from that reported there would be unanimity from both as to his divine character. The difficulty he recognises however, is the extent to which the early Church attributed to Jesus what he never said but which was an expression of early Christian dogma. Here, he says again, faith is said to be the foe of fact. The Evangelists believed in Jesus, loved him and believed him to be Lord. It is argued therefore that because of their faith, they were not objective and we must therefore seek to find the real Jesus. Warfield, using the arguments already cited against Schmiedel, seeks to show that the canon of criticism this produces is absurd.

"Are we to lay it down as the primary canon of criticism that no sympathetic report of a master's teaching is trustworthy; that only inimical reporters are credible reporters?"<sup>1</sup>

He maintains that the result of such an application universally would cause all history to be written backwards, i.e. to write the opposite of what contemporary friends thought of one.

This critical assault Warfield sees rooted in naturalism versus supernaturalism. In practice he believes:

"We can rid ourselves of him only by doing violence to the whole historical testimony and to the whole historical development as well . . ."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.159.

2. Ibid.,



He cites Bousset, an historian, who concedes that Jesus announced himself as 'the Messiah', 'the Son of Man', but goes on to state that it is 'inconceivable' that he meant pre-existence or was placing himself on a level with God. What, says Warfield, is more credible - the witnesses contemporary with Jesus or the consciousness of an historian?

The 'Real Jesus' says Warfield has been pre-determined by the researcher if he denies that Jesus asserted communion with the Father although admitting his self-consciousness of being 'the Son of Man'. Or if it is recognised that the 'Son' moves in the sphere of the divine life, what other than prejudice would preclude him from reaching the culminating expression of his divine self-consciousness in which the Son is given a share in the Divine name, Mt. 28:19. Such a denial is, says Warfield, purely arbitrary and leaves an important historical sequence unaccounted for in that the Trinitarian mode of speech current in the Early Church as seen in 2 Cor. 13:14 finds its complete account if its usage is rooted in the utterance of our Lord, but hangs in the air if denied.

Any attempt to get behind the Synoptics has failed, contends Warfield. There is no reason to deny his claim to be 'The Son of Man'. The Synoptic Jesus is divine because that he taught and the early Church believed him. If he is not whom he claimed to be then we should have a very different Jesus and a very different Christianity.

"We need the Jesus of history to account for the Christianity of history. And we need both the Jesus of history and the Christianity of history to account for the history of the world. The history of the world is the product of the precise Christianity which has actually existed, and this Christianity is the produce of the precise Jesus which actually was. To be rid of this

Jesus we must be rid of this Christianity, and to be rid of this Christianity we must be rid of the world-history which has grown out of it. We must have the Christianity of history and the Jesus of history, or we leave the world that exists, and as it exists, unaccounted for. But so long as we have either the Jesus of history or the Christianity of history we shall have a divine Jesus."<sup>1</sup>

For the sake of argument, Warfield is willing to engage the critical sciences to assist his defense of the deity of Christ. But as we have seen the Scriptures are not his exclusive ground of appeal.

". . . the Scriptures are far from giving us all the evidence we have."<sup>2</sup>

He is willing to appeal to the objective method of historical fact and the subjective elements of men's experiences of the Lord Christ in their lives. But it is to the Scriptures that Warfield primarily appeals to articulate his understanding of Jesus Christ.

"We must just be content to recognise that we are face to face here with the mystery of the two natures, which, although they do not, of course, formally enunciate the doctrine in so many words, the Evangelists yet effectively teach, since by it alone can consistently be induced between the two classes of facts which they present unhesitatingly in their narratives."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Ibid., p.304.
  2. Warfield, B.B., The Deity of Christ, The Fundamentals, Vol.I, pp.21-28, reprinted in Selected Shorter Writings, Vol. op.cit., p.155.
  3. Warfield, B.B., The Foresight of Jesus, Article in Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, ed. by James Hastings, D.D., Vol.I, pp.608-615; New York, Charles Scribners & Sons, reprinted in Biblical Doctrines, New York, Oxford 1929, p.83.



(3) There are passages in the Gospels which appear to question the conclusions reached by Warfield. It is to his exegeting of these that we now turn.

First, to Christ's alleged Confession of Sin in the incident concerning the Rich Young Ruler which appears in all three Synoptics.<sup>1</sup>

Warfield makes three points by way of general introduction to the incident. First, that it is part of an emphasis in all three Gospels that the Kingdom of God is a gratuity and not an acquisition. This he sees in that in all three Synoptics the pericope of the rich young ruler follows the receiving and blessing of little children. In Mark, it immediately follows this incident but in Luke it is preceded by a parable of the Pharisee and the Publican praying and in Matthew, it is succeeded by the parable of the workmen in the vineyard. All of those events surrounding the incident with the rich young ruler are highlighted in the words of Jesus re. babies - 'For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven'. Jesus is therefore emphasising the helplessness and receptivity of those who enter the Kingdom. A comment, says Warfield, on our Lord's teaching, is found in the incident of the rich young ruler. Second, the rich young ruler is characteristic of someone who would seek to enter the Kingdom in another fashion. He with his wealth, status, education and culture wants to know what he has to do, and in response Jesus has to reveal the shallowness of his nature and outlook. Third, Warfield conscious of the divergence in form between the Synoptic reports and the inferences, derogatory to Matthew's integrity as an historian, and injurious to his views of Jesus, seeks to underline the unity of their witness.

---

1. Warfield, B.B., Jesus alleged Confession of Sin ; Princeton Theological Review, Vol.XII, 1914, pp.177-228, reprinted in Christology and Criticism, op.cit., p.97ff.



"There are no substantial differences between the three reports which are given us of this remarkable incident. Each of the Evangelists records details peculiar to himself. Each narrative has its own tone and colouring: Mark's is distinguished by vividness, Luke's by plain straightforwardness, Matthew's by clearness. But it is precisely the same story which is told by them all : the same story in its contents, in its mode of development, in its denouement, in its lesson. Having any one of the three we have it all, presented after the same fashion and with the same force."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield now proceeds to expound the Gospel writers and their alleged recognition of the confession of sins by Jesus. In Matthew he notes that no emphasis falls on the Enclitic  $\mu\epsilon$  demonstrating no contrast between Jesus and the one who is good. The contrast, he sees, is between the good thing inquired of and the commandments of God.

"The declaration that there is one that is good does set God in contrast with all others . . . But it does not set God in contrast specifically with Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

In Mark, the ruler uses a title which is unknown in extant Jewish literature - 'Good Master'. It is this which determines the response of Jesus. This response could mean either ; you are wrong in calling me good - only God is good, or; there is a great deal involved in calling me good - for God only is good. The former Warfield thinks unlikely in that it presses the Enclitic  $\mu\epsilon$  too far. The contrast again is not between Jesus and God but between God and all others.

---

1. Ibid., p.102.

2. Ibid., p.105.

Warfield sees the drift of the conversation in Mark (and Luke) as being precisely the same as in Matthew. It is not necessary to suppose that either reported in full detail all that was said.

"Each selects the line of remark which seems to him to embody the pith of what was said; and the skill and faithfulness with which they have done this are attested by such a phenomenon as now faces us, where, amid even a striking diversity in the details reported, a complete harmony is preserved in the substance of the discourse."<sup>1</sup>

The more radical critics of Warfield's time had adopted the view that Mark's account of this incident was original. It was closely followed by Luke but "fundamentally altered by Matthew under the influence of dogmatic considerations."<sup>2</sup> The text is then handled accordingly. In Mark (and Luke) Jesus is said to repel the ascription of goodness because he is conscious of not deserving it, while Matthew, aware of Mark's account, alters it to preserve Christ's dignity but in so doing bungles it and excludes a trait from Mark which makes it meaningless.

Warfield's response is that such a thesis not only makes Matthew dishonest but is based on the stupidity of the Gospel writers. Matthew is not shrewd enough to carry through his dogmatic alterations and Matthew and Luke are too stupid to see the open meaning of this incident and that it was incompatible with the view of Jesus espoused in the rest of their account.

---

1. Ibid., p.108.

2. Ibid., p.110.



"Whatever may be the relations of these narratives, it is certain that Matthew's was not made out of Marks; and assuredly not as a dogmatic revision in the interests of our Lord's sinlessness and deity."<sup>1</sup>

Having stated how he believes the passages can be handled in principle he proceeds to discuss alternative theological interpretations. He considers seven in all. It is not necessary for our purposes to outline these. It is only required of us to say he considers these positions, e.g. the Arians in the light of his orthodoxy which he has sought to justify exegetically. Perhaps what is logically necessary for us to see in his discussions of alternative theological positions, is his insistence that the conclusions drawn from the text are seen to be consistent with the uniform testimony of the Gospels. In e.g. his analysis of the views of Karl Thieme that what Jesus is doing is repudiating the titles of the Rabbis, Warfield's response is that Jesus never at any time refuses for himself any of the titles of the Rabbis.

A further incident in the life of Jesus which had been taken, in Warfield's day, to be authentic because it brought under question the deity of Jesus. It is where Jesus is thought to be 'unstable' by his relations and 'under the influence of the demonic by the scribes.' These are said to be arguments against the supernatural nature of Christ as God for if he had been, his family would have recognised it and Jesus in reply to the scribes would not have distinguished between blasphemy against himself and against the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., 115.

2. Warfield, B.B., The Misconception of Jesus and the Blasphemy of the Son of Man ; Princeton Theological Review, Vol.XII, 1914, pp.367-410, reprinted in Christology and Criticism, op.cit.



Warfield looks first at Mark's account in Mark 3:20ff. He sees something unacceptable in the traditional interpretation. Jesus is said to have come to the house of his family, then he breaks off to discuss his relationship with the scribes, only to return without warning at V.31 so that V.22-30 is a parenthesis.

"This would lead one to believe that we have taken a false move somewhere."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>?</sup>ἐρχομαι often translated 'he comes into a house' (and fundamental to the traditional view) is followed by (perhaps best rendered to or unto as e.g. in Mark 1:29, Mt. 2:11, etc). This would place the idea of Jesus entering a house in some doubt. In fact, says Warfield, Mark would have more likely used εἰσερχομαι if the idea of his entering this house was of crucial importance. For Warfield, the opening clause means - 'He cometh home' which he seeks to justify by comparing with parallel usage and by showing how it is recommended by the context whereby Jesus having been to the Seaside (V.7) and on the Mountain (V.13) now returns home to Capernaum, the centre of his work. Here, as on former occasions (1:32, 2:3), the crowds gather.

This interpretation, says Warfield, removes the misleading notion of the opening statement so that no longer is V.22-30 a parenthesis but what we have here are two incidents.

In incident number one, the word used and translated in the A.V. and R.V. 'friends' can mean 'legates', 'representatives' or in the papyri 'agents' but he accepts, that

---

1. Ibid., p.57.

even though the limits of its connotations are unknown, the common usage of 'relations', 'kinsmen' or 'friends' is the correct one. The judgment of these kinsfolk, which may or may not have included his mother, and on the basis of hearsay was that he was 'beside himself'. On that basis they were willing to put him under restraint.

The judgment of Jesus' relations that he was 'beside himself' is different from the judgment that he was possessed by Beelzebul. There is a distinction in the evangelical narratives between demonic possession and insanity. The implication of the word, he says, is not strong. It implies:

" . . . no more than the subject is thrown out of his normal state into a condition of strong, perhaps ungovernable, emotion."<sup>1</sup>

His kinsfolk did not therefore believe Jesus to be a maniac but to be unstable.

Warfield sees no reason why like John the Baptist, Mary might have had her doubts. This is in no way inconsistent with the Supernaturalistic tradition of Jesus.

"The mere presence of this passage in one of the Evangelists is proof enough that it contains nothing contradictory to the reverence for Jesus' person which is common to them all."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.65.

2. Ibid., pp.68-69.

Since to-day the same judgment is being made of Christ and Christians, argues Warfield, we can scarcely look upon a similar judgment among his contemporaries as strange.

The second incident recorded by all three Synoptics is the charge made that it was by the aid of Beelzebul that he cast out demons. (Mk.3:28-30 ; Lk.12:10 ; Matt.12:31, 32).

Mark alone records that the Scribes claim Jesus to be possessed by Beelzebul (in contrast to the judgment of his friends). This, according to Mark, is why Jesus makes his statement re. blasphemy. Warfield observes the solemn introduction with 'the stately march of its words'. The declaration of Jesus begins with the proclamation of universal forgivableness. Closely defined and specific sins including blasphemy can be forgiven. There is then a radical contrast drawn to that form of blasphemy which cannot be forgiven - for ever. Here the word blasphemy is used in the highest sense of irreverence.

"It is, no doubt, a startling result of distinguishing blasphemy against the Holy Spirit from blasphemies against God in general, that thus the Holy Spirit is set over against God in general and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is declared more unpardonable than blasphemy against God."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield therefore concedes from this passage the possibility of blaspheming against Jesus and not against the Holy Spirit.

---

1. Ibid., p.75.



" . . . the point of the warning (is)  
 . . . that such words against him as  
 these particular words approached to  
 the unpardonable sin because they  
 expressly assailed not him but the  
 Spirit working in him."<sup>1</sup>

Luke is seen to have placed this incident in a wholly different connection. This causes Warfield to comment.

"There is no intrinsic reason why  
 Jesus may not have made such a  
 declaration more than once."<sup>2</sup>

Warfield recognises that Jesus' reference to blasphemy is difficult to interpret. He proposes that what we have here is parallelism, in the two clauses of V.10 and that of V.8 and 9, in order to contrast not the nature of the offence committed, but the difference in the persons against whom the offence is committed.

Matthew's account is said to be comprehensive. The substance is seen to be the same but the language is quite different. Matthew is said to be giving an independent report. His presentation has an extreme and impressive simplicity. There is much repetition but this he sees for tone and effect and does not believe it adds anything to the content. Matthew's account rather than undermining underlines the person of Jesus.

"To blaspheme the Son of Man is  
 a sin so dreadful that it might be  
 thought unforgivable; and the  
 heinousness of the unforgivable sin  
 may be estimated when it is perceived

---

1. Ibid., p.78.

2. Ibid., p.79.

that it is more heinous than this. Clearly the Son of Man is not mere man : it is only because he is not mere man indeed, that speaking a word against him is blasphemy."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield finally quotes those critics like Wellhausen, and Schmiedel. Wellhausen who sees the report as comparing railing against God versus railing against man. And since Jesus is placed in the former category it cannot have been an assertion of the human Jesus. Schmiedel believes Mark altered the original Luke (in this instance) for dogmatic reasons. The original Luke is said to distinguish Jesus from God because Jesus was only human.

Such views Warfield sees at variance with the uniform testimony of the Synoptics but he does not believe that his own exegesis has solved all the problems.

" . . . it is unquestionable that the passage contains difficulties. It is not easy to separate clearly blasphemy of the Son of Man from blasphemy of that Holy Spirit by which he wrought his great works of healing upon the possessed."<sup>2</sup>

(4) Before turning to examine the logic of Warfield's exegetical method and its relationship to infallibility, we turn for further insight to a Sermon of Warfield. It was delivered to a Sunday afternoon class in Princeton for the students at the Seminary. Its value to us is in that it is of a more devotional nature, it

---

1. Ibid., p.85.

2. Ibid., p.92.

centres on the deity of Christ, but it is an exposition from John's Gospel rather than the Synoptics : It is based on John 1:1.<sup>1</sup>

There is, says Warfield, equal basis for the deity of Christ in the Synoptics as in the writings of John. He quotes approvingly the insights of Johannes Weiss that the Jesus of the oldest Gospel had advanced toward the Jesus of the latest Gospel. Similarly he delights in that the critics of his time were increasingly admitting that the conception of a Divine Messiah was not only primitive-Christian but pre-Christian in being part of the expectations of a Messiah. John's affirmation that Jesus is God, is for Warfield therefore nothing new. The difference is the manner in which it is presented.

"It would not be misleadingly expressed if we said that in the Synoptics the divine nature of the man Jesus is exhibited while in John the human life of the divine word is portrayed."<sup>2</sup>

The deity of Jesus is therefore the point of departure for John's Gospel. The first verse as part of the prologue takes us into the depths of eternal reality. It is a verse pregnant with significance and meaning.

It begins with our Lord being given a unique name. Warfield, by unique, means peculiar to the New Testament. 'The word' as a designation is not presented to us by John as remarkable or new. No emphasis falls on it but what is

---

1. Warfield, B.B., The Glory of the Word, a Sermon on John 1:1, in Faith and Life, Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1974, p.1.

2. Ibid., pp.82-83.



asserted of it. It must therefore have been a current designation of Jesus. Warfield is uncertain of the origin of the name. Perhaps, he concedes, from Philo or the Neo-Stoics who were seeking for a mediation between the Transcendent God and the world of Space and Time. But he perceives John using it in not only a different but a contradictory manner from the Neo-Stoics.

"What is clearest about it is that he uses it as a designation of Jesus of the highest import, as attributing to him properly divine functions, if not directly a properly divine nature."<sup>1</sup>

John is then said to make three assertions concerning the Lord.

The First concerns his eternal subsistence. Warfield points out the weakness of the translation is 'In the beginning was the Word'. The emphasis here, he believes, is upon 'In the beginning' and 'Was' so that a better translation would be 'In the beginning the Word was'. Here the 'was' is seen not to be a copula but an expression of existence. The point is that the Word is said to antedate the beginning of things. When John 1:1 and its parallel Genesis 1:1 is held together one sees, says Warfield, that the Word was not made, it already was.

The Second Assertion, is an even greater one, for the three are said to be arranged in a climatic series. When the Lord is said to be with God. The with is not used as in a common expression of co-existence. This points to an active relationship of personal intercourse. So that the Word is said to be from all eternity God's fellow. Here

---

1. Ibid., p.86.

is the intimacy of Communion that the Word is said to have with God.

The Third and final Assertion is the climax. For the Word is said not only to be closely associated with God but God himself - the Lord was God.

"In some deep sense distinct from God, He is at the same time in some high sense identical with God."<sup>1</sup>

Warfield says it is difficult to reproduce in English the emphasis of the Greek, for the word God in the final clause is placed in immediate juxtaposition with the words 'with God' and therefore is highlighted in contrast with them - As if John was correcting any notion that somehow the Word was less than God. The term God is without an article. This does not weaken the affirmation. Quasi-proper names, he says, like 'God' only require it when an individualising emphasis is necessary. What is thrown into relief is the quality of Godhood in the God with whom the Word is identified.

What is being asserted then is:

". . . that he who has been eternally with God has been at the same time in an ineffable fashion eternally God's self."<sup>2</sup>

Warfield therefore understands John's introducing us to a conception which is later formulated as the doctrine of the Trinity.

---

1. Ibid., p.90.

2. Ibid., p.91.

C. It is now possible, from these illustrations of Warfield engaging in exegesis, to assess what is involved in the use of the infallible Scriptures in the course of Warfield's Theological arguments. This assessment will be divided into five sections. First, negatively and positively, we shall consider what are and are not the implications of holding an infallible Bible to exegesis. Second, we shall observe how the Bible is used in Apologetics; third, its use in exegesis in refutation of more liberal critics; fourth, its use in worship and to excite devotion; fifth, we shall attempt to set out the logic of his argument to demonstrate where the infallible Scriptures fit into the scheme.

(i) Warfield's use of an infallible Scripture:

- (a) does not cause him to ignore Greek semantics in the construction of that language and its implication for meaning. This is seen in his willingness to discard a traditional translation as in John 1:1 or in showing the Theological import of their being no emphasis on the enclitic *με* in Matthew's account of the rich young ruler narrative.
- (b) does not result in Warfield becoming a passive recipient of infallible information. In refuting the traditional view of this being a Parenthesis in Mark between v.22-30 of Chapter 3, he expresses how he feels towards the reading of the text and that it seems to be unbalanced if read with a parenthesis.
- (c) does not involve assembling proof texts to validate his thesis. He carefully considers the contextual factors and the emphasis this produces in a narrative, e.g. in the incident of the rich young ruler he goes to great lengths to indicate that the context speaks of the Kingdom being received as a gratuity and not an acquisition, hence he reasons the place of children in the text preceding this narrative.



- (d) does not hinder the use of logical inference and deduction. In his exposition of Mark's Christology, the view of Jesus which he claims to be affirmed by Mark is implicit and can only be gleaned by inference from designations used in the course of his descriptions of the life of Jesus.
- (e) does not cause him to hide the differences between, e.g. the Synoptic accounts of the life of Jesus. In the record of Jesus comments on Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, he discusses the differences in wording, context and emphasis in the Synoptists.
- (f) does not result in him denying the writers' use of sources and sayings in the compilation of their Gospels as is evident in his examination of the Synoptics witness to Jesus. The infallible Scriptures are not therefore a hindrance to his examining on merit the insights of critical scholarship.
- (g) does not involve the setting aside of the historical method in examining the text, provided such a method does not have an anti-Supernaturalist bias and does not see faith (per se) as an enemy of the facts. Warfield therefore seeks to show the historical necessity of the Biblical witness being true to fact. Similarly in the course of argument he is willing to call upon the authoritative judgment of historians to refute other historians such as Schmiedel rather than appealing directly to the infallible Scriptures.
- (h) does not produce a solution to all theological and exegetical problems. Warfield admits, e.g. that he is unable to reconcile the Synoptic accounts of Jesus and the Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

However, Warfield's use of an infallible Scripture:

- (a) does demand that the Gospel witness be in harmony with each other and that their testimony be uniform so that e.g. when Warfield is confronted with a conflict of testimony in Mark and Luke with respect to the context in which Jesus spoke of Blasphemy, he seeks a reconciliation by suggesting that perhaps Jesus may have made the declaration more than once.
- (b) does allow him to make analogous reference both in the Old and New Testaments to reinforce what he believes, e.g. in paralleling the possible response of Mary to Jesus with that of John the Baptist or in quoting the parallel use of Word in Genesis 1:1 with John 1:1.
- (c) does demand that the Gospel reporters be accurate in their statement of the events. Warfield will accept that there is diversity of content and emphasis in the Synoptics but maintains that there is no substantial difference.
- (d) does make him assume the integrity of the Biblical writers. He rejects as unacceptable that Matthew might have deliberately altered the Markan source for dogmatic reasons and so dishonestly portrayed Jesus saying something he did not say.
- (e) does assume that the writers of the text are consistent in the view of Jesus they present, i.e. to justify the view that Matthew changed Mark for dogmatic reasons, it must be argued that Mark was not able to see that what he was recording was inconsistent with his overall view of Jesus. This Warfield finds untenable.
- (f) does cause him to distinguish between recognising the origin of a word and allowing the word's unchristian roots to determine its meaning. In e.g. John's use of logos he will not permit the Neo-Stoic origins to cloud our understanding of John's usage and meaning.

(2) In Apologetics, Warfield's use of the infallible Scriptures is as part of the historical evidence which he believes ought to persuade the reasonable man. His starting point is not therefore his convictions about the Bible's authority. He seeks to use it as an historical document which is part of 'a copious consentient and contemporary tradition re. Jesus'. The question as to whether their witness is from the perspective of faith or not, is secondary. The primary question was for Warfield - Is their testimony true? By revealing e.g. the designations of Jesus common at his time and discovered in the primitive sources, he believes that any unbiased historian would be forced to concede that what the Gospels declare about Jesus is what he believed himself to be. Jesus is, therefore, he concludes, either bad, mad or a Supernatural Person.

For Warfield therefore who Jesus is is determined not by the infallible authority of the Bible; but through the historical witness of the Bible we discover who Jesus is, and it is on the basis of who he is and therefore on the Authority of what he said that we are to accept the infallible authority of the Bible. Logically, therefore, for the sake of his Apologetic stance, he is willing to set aside his faith in an infallible guide. However, his faith perspective, which involves his view of Scripture must unquestioningly colour how he is willing the Scriptures to be used even as an historical witness.

(3) In Warfield's exegesis of a controversial text which might be used to contradict his understanding of e.g. who Jesus is, again logically he would argue that his method does not demand belief in the infallible authority of Scripture. He is convinced that if unbiased and reasonable in seeking to handle the text one will concur



with his conclusions. His approach therefore is the application of the principles of grammatico-historical exegesis. In both passages we examined, he uses whatever scholarly tools are available to discern the construction and ambience of the Greek text, he draws parallels with extra-biblical and biblical usage, he insists that the context be the matrix of meaning and having given his interpretation he asks whether it solves the problems or raises even more. At times he is willing to accept the conclusions of scholars which they use to seek to refute his position. One sees this in Matthew's account of Jesus' discussion of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Warfield accepts the exegesis of his critics but refusing to make the inference which would question the integrity of Matthew. He therefore prefers to plead ignorance. Here one sees that in spite of the logical possibility of Matthew's account being in error, in practical terms because of his views of Scripture he will not permit that deduction.

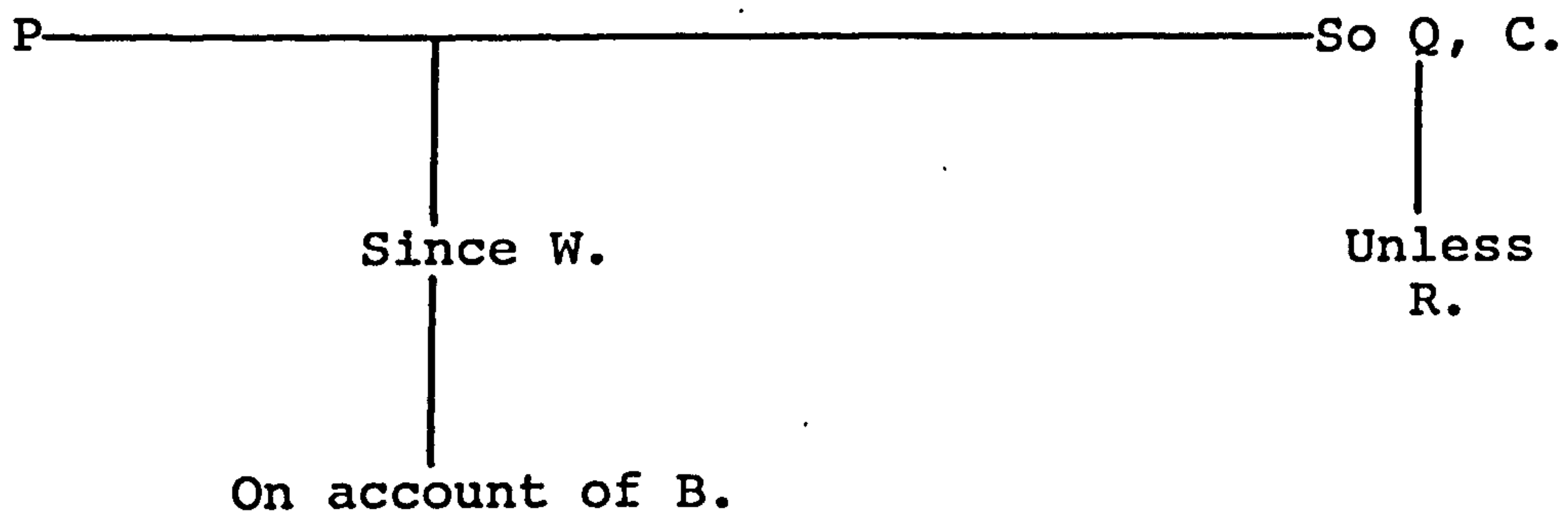
(4) Warfield's use of Scripture in the context of worship is strikingly similar to his academic endeavours. He examines the origins of the language; highlights the emphasis of the Greek construction of the clauses; demonstrates by comparison and contrast how a word ('with') influences interpretation. The two major differences in the use of Scripture in this situation is first, when he has completed his exegesis, the theological affirmations of the writer are coherently presented and articulated within a framework familiar to writer and reader, e.g. the Trinity. Second, direct appeal is made from these theological affirmations to the obligations placed upon a believer to embrace them, in that they therefore have the authority of the infallible Scriptures.

(5) THE LOGIC OF WARFIELD'S ARGUMENT

We shall use to aid us in setting out Warfield's position, the nature of arguments exposed by Stephen Toulmin.<sup>1</sup> The argument of Warfield is complex and may not easily be presented by way of syllogism. The advantage of Toulmin's approach is that it makes clear

"the functions of the different propositions invoked in the course of an argument, and the relevance of the different sorts of criticism which can be directed against it."<sup>2</sup>

Toulmin's analysis may be set out in symbolic terms as follows:

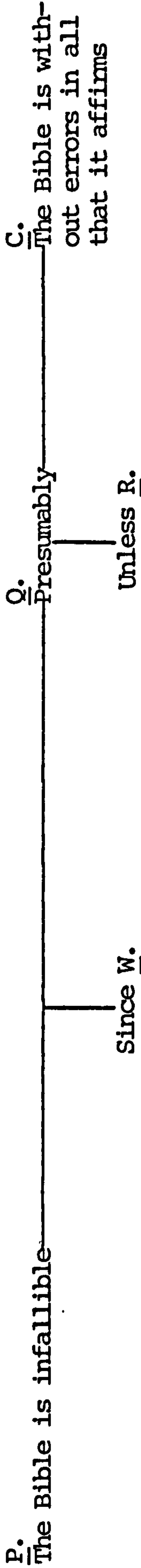


- 
1. Toulmin, Stephen, E., *The Uses of Argument*, Cambridge, U.P., 1954.
  2. *Ibid.*, p.9.

P. represents the Premise or starting point of the argument, W. the Warrant which immediately justifies the move from P. to the Claim. B. is the backing to the Warrant. C. is the Claim, with Q. standing for the Qualifier that there is a recognised condition of Rebuttal (R) which the argument takes into account.

The one change we have made in Toulmin's symbols is that we have altered his D. (symbolic for Data) to a P (to represent a Premise). The reason being that Warfield and Briggs both accept the affirmation 'The Bible is Infallible'. This is therefore a premise in their argument and not a piece of empirical data. It does not affect the value of using Toulmin's analysis to set out the logic of Warfield's thesis. Viz:





Since W.  
The Bible is 'The Word of God'  
and God would not mislead  
us concerning the Truth

On account of B.

1. This is the way God has revealed himself
2. The Bible is 'inspired' by God
3. This is what the Bible claims about itself
4. This is the attitude of Jesus and the Apostles to the Old Testament
5. It is the most reasonable explanation of the Data
6. It is the Church doctrine
7. It satisfies our religious need
8. It causes us to know God by the Holy Spirit
9. Its human qualities are to its Divine Word as the humanity of Jesus relates to his Divinity

1. Error is defined as deviation from mathematical and scientific precision without reference to the intent of the author.
2. Infallibility is affirmed by the Bibles we possess instead of the original autographs.
3. The scientific method may handle the phenomena of Scripture without prior acceptance of what the Scriptures teach.
4. The interpreter ignore the place of the Bible in the economy of God's salvation

This could rightly be accused of being an oversimplification of Warfield's argument, but if one accepts that his thesis has already been given adequate exposition what we have is the logic of his position.

The implication of this we shall consider in our concluding chapter.

## CHAPTER III.

### BIOGRAPHY

Charles Augustus Briggs was born in New York City in 1841. His father owned a small family business. His first major studies were at the University of Virginia. From there he switched in 1861 to Union Theological Seminary where his chief teacher was Henry Boynton Smith, who,

"While holding to traditional views of the Bible, encouraged a spirit of free enquiry among his students."<sup>1</sup>

On graduating from Union, after managing the family business for a few years due to the illness of his father, Briggs with his new wife sailed for Germany in the Summer of 1866. It was while in Germany that Briggs' Old School Presbyterian views began to change. First, in Berlin he imbibed the teachings of E.W. Hengstenberg, which caused him to become disenchanted with orthodoxy. He studied with, I.A. Dorner whom he believed offered, in spite of his rationalism, a method of providing a coherent basis for evangelical faith as did Emil Roediger. In 1869 just prior to his return to the U.S. he went to <sup>G</sup>öttingen to study under the Old Testament critic, G. Heinrich Ewald. The effect of this time in Germany was to alter his views on Biblical study. He now wanted a method that would be both evangelical and critical. Commenting in a letter to his American mentor, H.B. Smith, he wrote:

- 
1. Bailey, Warner, M., Wm. Robertson Smith and American Biblical Studies, The Journal of Presbyterian History, Vol.51, No.3, (Fall 1973), p.288.



"the great fault with American theology is that it is too little critical."<sup>1</sup>

On his return home Briggs became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Roselle, New Jersey. While in 1870 he wrote what is believed to be the first article on Biblical Theology in the U.S. for the American Presbyterian Review. In it he notes with approval, Oehler's 'Prolegomena zur Theologie des Alten Testaments', 1845 where he projects a historical genetic presentation of revealed religion.<sup>2</sup>

By 1874 Briggs was asked to teach at Union Seminary, New York, and two years later became Davenport Professor of Hebrew and Cognate Languages. In his Inaugural address he urged that Biblical study not be bound by tradition or dogmatic views.

"So long as the Word of God is honoured, and its decisions regarded as final, what matters it if a certain book be detached from the name of one holy man and ascribed to another, or classed among those with unknown authors."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Quoted by Carl Hatch in Hatch, Carl E. 'The Charles A. Briggs Heresy Trial, (New York: Exposition Press, 1969), p.23.
  2. Biblical Theology, with especial reference to the New Testament - American Presbyterian Review, (New Series), Vol.2, 1870, p.113.
  3. C.A. Briggs "Exegetical Theology, especially in the Old Testament", an address on the occasion of his inauguration as Davenport Professor of Hebrew and Cognate Languages in the Union Theological Seminary, New York City, Sept. 21, 1876. (New York: Rogers and Sherwood, 1876), p.15, cited in Jack B. Rogers, Donald K. McKim, 'The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible', Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1979, p.349.

These first indications of Briggs' stance with regard to the Authority of Scripture became more overt when taking over as joint managing editor with A.A. Hodge of Princeton, of 'The Presbyterian Review'. This journal was meant to reconcile Old School and New School Presbyterian Theology by bringing together contributors from Northwest, Auburn, Union, Lane and Princeton Seminaries. It was when they began to deal with the issues raised by Higher Criticism and in particular in response to the heresy trial of W. Robertson Smith that tensions surfaced in the journal and the cleavage between the Princeton School and the position of Charles Briggs became apparent. The articles in which the differences were highlighted are discussed in detail in the main body of the thesis. At this point we shall merely indicate this historical occurrence.

It was decided that the two protagonists on biblical criticism should each choose from contributors to express alternatively a positive and negative position. The four main articles relevant to our discussion were the first, by A.A. Hodge and B.B. Warfield on Inspiration (The Presbyterian Review, Vol.2, Ap. 1881), pp.225-260. The second, by Charles Briggs on the Rights, Duties and Limits of Biblical Criticism (The Presbyterian Review, Vol.2, July 1881), pp.550-579. A further Article by Briggs on 'A Critical Study of the History of the Higher Criticism with special reference to the Pentateuch (The Presbyterian Review, Vol.4, Jan 1883), pp.69-130. And the last in the series by F.L. Patton on 'The Dogmatic Aspects of Pentateuchal Criticism' (The Presbyterian Review, Vol.4, April 1883), pp.341-410. In these articles the main lines of division were clarified.

Meanwhile the General Assembly's statements in 1882 and 1883 were showing alarm at the Brigg's stance re.



the authority of Scripture.<sup>1</sup> Briggs views on the Bible, were more publicised in his book 'Biblical Study' produced in 1883 and two years later his belief that scholasticism had distorted the reformed faith in America was articulated in the publication of 'American Presbyterianism'.<sup>2</sup>

It was in 1888 that Briggs and Warfield came together as co-editors of the 'Presbyterian Review' at the resignation of F.L. Patton. After the initial honeymoon period relationships began to be strained. Warfield began to usurp the authority of Briggs in areas the latter believed to be his own domain. The tension reached its expression after the General Assembly of 1889 which had sent overtures to all the presbyterians asking : "Do you desire a revision of the Confession of Faith? If so, in what respects and to what extent?". Briggs was a revisionist and Warfield an anti-revisionist. According to the agreed pattern it was Briggs' turn to comment on the 1889 Assembly but Warfield insisted on inserting an article on the subject. In September of 1889, Briggs resigned from being editor of 'The Review' and the Union Faculty voted to discontinue publication. Higher criticism, confessional reunion and personal conflict had destroyed the last link of co-operation between the New School and Old School Parties in American Presbyterianism.

One week before his resignation from the Review Briggs published 'Whither?' A Theological question for the Times, as a defense of the revisionist movement and as an expose of the scholasticism of those defending the

---

1. Cf. Rogers and McKim, op.cit., pp351-352.

2. Briggs, C.A. Biblical Study : Its Principles, Methods and History (New York: Charles Scubners Sons, 1883)

Briggs, C.A. American Presbyterianism (New York, Charles Scubner's Sons, 1885.)



Westminster Standards. Here he began to spell out his views of Biblical Infallibility over and against those of the Princeton School. Warfield's response was a series of articles subsequently published as "The Westminster Assembly and Its Work".

The turning point in the life of Briggs and his controversial career was his transference in 1891 to the Chair of Biblical Theology at Union Seminary in New York. The donor of the chair and chairman of the Union Board asked him to speak at his inaugural address on 'The Authority of Holy Scripture'. The content and tone of the address was provocative. He not only baited the conservatives over their views on Authority and the Bible, but questioned traditional views of original sin and espoused the notion of progressive sanctification after death.

The result of Briggs' intemperance was that at the General Assembly in May 1891, overtures from sixty-three Presbyteries demanding action were received. These were referred to a Standing Committee on Theological Seminaries chaired by Patton and consisting of his own anti-Briggs selectees. The Assembly at their request voted to veto Briggs election to the Union Seminary Chair. In October of 1891, a committee of the New York Presbytery presented two formal charges of heresy concerning the Authority of the Bible and progressive sanctification. These charges were defeated by 94 votes to 39. This prosecuting committee appealed not to the immediately superior court (the Synod) but to the General Assembly. In 1892 in Portland, Oregon, the Assembly accepted the prosecuting committee's appeal and voted 429-87 to send the case to the New York Presbytery for a full trial. On the day of adjournment an overture was presented and accepted which Briggs believed prejudiced his case before its trial. It was known as the 'Portland Deliverance'. It stated:

"Our Church holds that the inspired word as it came from God is without error . . . The assertion of the contrary cannot but shake the confidence of the people in the sacred books. All who enter office in our Church solemnly profess to receive them as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. If they change their belief on this point, Christian honour demands that they should withdraw from our ministry. They have no right to use the pulpit or the chair of the professor for the dissemination of their errors until they are dealt with by the slow process of discipline."<sup>1</sup>

November 1892 saw Briggs being tried on six charges by the Presbytery of New York. These were upheld,<sup>2</sup> and in May of 1893 the General Assembly Meeting in Washington, D.C., tried Briggs on the floor of the Court where Briggs acted as his own attorney. After three days of argument, the vote went 383 to 116 against him. The following day he was suspended from the ministry. In 1894, his friend and ally Henry Preserved Smith was also removed. Briggs continued to pursue his advocacy of Higher Criticism and Ecumencity. In 1899 he entered the priesthood of the Protestant Episcopal Church. From this point his writings were of a less polemical nature majoring on the Life of Jesus, a Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the book of Psalms and Church Unity. He died in 1913.

---

1. Cited by Roger and McKim, op.cit., p.360.

2. These were recorded in the defence of Professor Briggs before the Presbytery of New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1893.



## I. BRIGGS' VIEW OF KNOWLEDGE AND AUTHORITY

The factors influencing the development of the Scientific Method in the nineteenth century and its application to the Christian religion in that era, apart from being multifarious and diverse, are beyond the scope of this non-historical essay. The Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment, all produced their 'critics' who found fault with the Christian affirmation concerning 'the infallibility of Scripture'.<sup>1</sup>

Until the nineteenth century these critics of the Bible were generally outside the Church.<sup>2</sup> 'The Problems' often used to deride those who embraced the Authority of Scripture were now used as the data in the formulation of a new stance for the Christian Critic. Originating in Germany with, the spark, the research of Eichhorn (1804) both in the Old and New Testaments, the fires of a new Christian era were fanned into flame.

Although aware of the European revolution in the Bible and Criticism, the English speaking world was generally unaffected by it through intellectual and geographical insularity, until the second half of the century.<sup>3</sup> The Ferment was aroused in Britain and subsequently in the U.S. by the writings of S.T. Coleridge, Thomas Arnold, and the publication in 1860 of 'Essays and Reviews'. To appreciate the milieu within which Briggs presented his case we must consider this briefly.

1. I am thinking as an example the satirical writings of Voltaire (*La Bible enfin expliquée*, 1776), cf. Redwood, John, *Reason, Ridicule and Religion : The Age of Enlightenment in England 1660-1750*.
2. Exceptions would have been the Philosopher Spinoza (1632-1677) sometimes called the 'Father of Higher Criticism' who questioned the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, as did the Roman Catholics, Simon, (1680), Astruc, (1753), Geddes, (1792) although the latter three did not rule out Moses as the compiler of the documents.
3. Cameron, Nigel M.de S., *Criticism in Controversy*, Ph.D. Unpublished Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1981, p.28ff.



S.T. Coleridge was neither a Biblical scholar nor a Theologian yet he is described by Carpenter as 'the most important influence of this age'.<sup>1</sup>

His contribution to this debate was his 'Letters on the Inspiration of the Scriptures' published posthumously as 'Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit'. (1840) He had studied in Germany and was familiar with their critical method which he desired to espouse. The manner in which he chose to do it was to be the reason for his influence. He sought to hold together his Christian piety with a rejection of a view of the Bible which was dependent upon a rationalistic and evidential apologetic. Following Schleiermacher, Coleridge emphasises the subjective dimension of religious experience. The Authority of the Scriptures is therefore based upon the experience of Scripture whereby it touches areas of need.

"I have found words for my inner  
most thoughts, songs for my joy,  
utterance for my hidden griefs, and  
pleadings for my shame and my  
feebleness. In short, whatever finds  
me, bears witness for itself that it  
has proceeded from a Holy Spirit."<sup>2</sup>

Coleridge repudiates the notion that one may go from this experience of Spiritual authority, to argue that the writers of Scripture were divinely and infallibly informed as well as inspired. He therefore reasons that attempts to harmonise discrepancies or to justify some of the Biblical morality is untenable. If a line is not drawn, he argues between the view that 'the Bible contains the religion of Christians' and that 'whatever is contained in the Bible is the Christian religion', the result is Bibliolatry.<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Carpenter, J.E., The Bible in the Nineteenth Century, 1903, quoted by Cameron, op.cit., p.29.
  2. Coleridge, S.T., 'Confession of an Inquiring Spirit', Letter I, London, 1840, quoted by Cameron, op.cit., p.31.
  3. Coleridge, op.cit., Letter 2, p.296.

The scene is therefore set for combining the handling of the Scriptures like any other Book and yet recognising its spiritual value. Cameron states his impact thus:

"With its twin emphases on the over-riding significance of personal experience, and the necessity of abandoning infallibility and the apologetic which it entailed, it swiftly entered the intellectual life of the day and spread the influence of its author far beyond the personal circle which had long since imbibed the thrust of his thought."<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby School, educational reformer and social activist, authored a little book called 'Essay on the Right Interpretation and Understanding of the Scriptures'. (1831) Arnold had read Coleridge's letters before publication and knew their contents would evoke another 'reformation' in England. He was in substantial agreement with their content. He had often wrestled with the intellectual problem of how the disciplined and inquiring mind was to handle the contradictions and immoralities affirmed in Scripture, without engaging in blind belief. Again like Coleridge he distinguishes between what is revealed in the Bible and the historical record of it. This parallels his distinction between 'the Christian faith' and questions historical, critical and scientific.

"With Christian faith, there can be no tampering . . . we must indeed, 'render unto God the things that

---

1. Cameron, op.cit., p.33.



are God's' ; but we must also  
'render unto Caesar the things  
that are Caesar's', that  
intellectual wisdom may not be  
denied her lawful tribute".<sup>1</sup>

Arnold argues for the separation of these two spheres. To integrate is to make the critics 'impugners of orthodoxy'. The truth of Christianity is therefore restricted to the moral and spiritual dimension and is immune from the process of critical inquiry.

The scene was now set in Britain for the dissemination of the more critical approach to the Bible. There were, as might be expected, a variety of approaches. Those who were moderately critical were the precursors of men like A.B. Bruce, Marcus Dods, and W. Robertson Smith, the mentors of Charles Briggs. The more radical stance was evidenced in the publication of 'Essays and Reviews'. (1860) Seven authors were asked to write papers on a wide variety of topics. The result was to quote J.K. Mozley

"a wider break with the traditional position in respect of the Bible and Theology than any previous volume."<sup>2</sup>

After 'Essays and Reviews' no longer was Britain to be seen as the bastion of resistance to 'German Criticism'. Within the ranks of the British ecclesiastical establishment were those who were emissaries of it. What caused the furore through this publication was not the espousing of critical views. It was their justification of such views from a naturalistic base.

- 
1. Arnold, T., Essay on the Right and Interpretation and Understanding of the Scriptures, in Sermon Vol.II, London, 1832, p.I.VII.
  2. Mozley, J.K., Some Tendencies in British Theology from the Publication of Lux Mundi to the Present Day, London, 1951, p.11.



"The Essayists were distinctly the disciples of Continental thinking in marked contrast to the pious supernaturalism that distinguished the later Critical scholars who eventually won the day for Criticism in Britain."<sup>1</sup>

It would be unfair to classify Briggs as a direct inheritor of the views propounded in 'Essays and Reviews'. To see more the direct influences on his thinking we must cross the Atlantic and inquire as to the Critical developments in the New World in the nineteenth century.

The Enlightenment spirit had been in the New Colonies from its inception with personalities like Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Elihu Palmer, Thomas Paine and others who would never have described the Bible as infallible. Nevertheless, contrary to the thesis of Rogers and McKim<sup>2</sup> the equation of the infallibility of Scripture with its inerrancy did not emerge as a unique Princetonian affirmation due to the influence of Scottish common sense realism. Perhaps without the sophistication of Charles Hodge and B.B. Warfield, yet nevertheless as John Woodbridge<sup>3</sup> has demonstrated, this was the common view : of Harvard textbooks in the eighteenth century, of Jonathan Edwards, (the Congregationalists), men of the stature of Timothy Dwight and Samuel Hopkins and a host of Baptists, Lutherans and Methodists who wrote in the nineteenth century over and against the emerging German critical stance.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Cameron, op.cit., p.59.

2. Rogers and McKim, op.cit.,

3. Woodbridge, John D., Biblical Authority, Zondervan, Michigan, 1982.

4. Ibid., pp.121-126.

George Marsden, the historian, recognises that the influence of German thought had been transmitted to America largely through the medium of S.T. Coleridge.<sup>1</sup>

The Old School Presbyterians represented by Princeton were not unique in reacting negatively in America. The Presbyterian Quarterly Review, a publication of the New School Presbyterians, in an article by its editor Benjamin J. Wallace, explains the mood at the time of Briggs' emergence as a Theologian. Surveying a batch of recent publications, including the works of Horace Bushnell, Henry James and an edition of the works of Coleridge, Wallace expresses concern at this new 'Spirituality'. By this he meant the exalting of the soul over matter, the emphasising in religion, e.g. 'of whatever brings God and man into most intimate union'. Wallace, after showing the roots of Anglo-Saxon philosophy in Aristotle, Bacon and the Scottish Common Sense philosophy, attributes this new Platonism to Immanuel Kant. Union College, where Briggs was to become professor, he specifically mentions as a place which bids fair to become a fountain of Coleridgeanism. He quotes disapprovingly of one of their professors, Laurens P. Hickock who

"has written a work on Rational Psychology, and more recently one on Moral Science, both based on this system."<sup>2</sup>

If this was the mood emerging in the U.S.A., what then were the immediate influences on Charles Briggs to cause him to argue as he did with respect of Biblical Infallibility. /

- 
1. Marsden, George, M., The Evangelical Mind and the New School, Presbyterian Experience, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1970, p.153.
  2. Wallace, Benjamin, J., 'Religion and Philosophy', Presbyterian Quarterly Review 2, (March 1854), pp.655-687.

We now turn to the more direct influences on Briggs' view of Knowledge and Authority. It was while in Germany from 1866 that Briggs began to imbibe the critical method developing in Germany. He had studied under E.W. Hengstenberg, I.A. Dorner, Emil Roediger and G. Heinrich Ewald. He believed such men had encouraged the liberation of Biblical scholarship without the rejection of the Gospel. Apart from Briggs' reference to such men in his writings his general positive stance re German Theology is seen in his 'History of the Study of Theology'.<sup>1</sup>

He sees the revival of the study of Theology in Germany in the eighteenth century with the introduction of the new learning based on the inductive method and under the influences of the two teaching universities of Halle and Gottingen. At these institutions the Professors reverted from the Scholastic Theology to the Positive Theology. Göttingen, e.g. produced Eichhorn the father of Higher Criticism.

Briggs lists the four fold gains as:

- (1) Freedom of instruction over against limitations by authority
- (2) The new Philosophy of Wolff and Kant, based on Cosmology and Physics, over against Aristotle
- (3) The new Humanism, in place of the imitative study of the classics : a critical historical study
- (4) The use of the modern languages in place of Latin.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Briggs, C.A., History of the Study of Theology, Duckworth and Co., London, 1916.

2. Ibid., p.179.



Schleiermacher, he sees as the chief influence on German thought in the nineteenth century and by implication a major factor in his own theological pilgrimage. He calls him "the father of the modern German Evangelical Theology".<sup>1</sup> He sees him building the structure of modern theology in the true mystic spirit on the religious feeling, apprehending Jesus Christ as Saviour. Schleiermacher, a product of the university of Halle is said to combine the critical method with evangelical piety. Briggs specifically mentions I.A. Dorner as one who carried on the work of Schleiermacher.<sup>2</sup> Dorner was one of Briggs' teachers in Germany.

In considering the development of Biblical Interpretation Briggs again shows his indebtedness to Schleiermacher. While comparing the older exegetes, who were at fault in neglecting the human element and the variety of features of the Bible on the human side, with the newer exegetes who were still more at fault in neglecting the divine element and the unity of the Bible, Briggs applauds Schleiermacher who, he says,

"deserves the credit for combining all that had this far been gained into a higher unity, by his organic method of interpretation."<sup>3</sup>

He then quotes at length from Schleiermacher to state his hermeneutical method, that of combining the philological with the dogmatic in an organic approach to Scripture. This, says Briggs, is a revival of the Puritan Principle wrapt up in Covenant Theology, working itself through the schools

---

1. Ibid., p.186.

2. Ibid., p.186.

3. Biblical Study, op.cit., p.349.

of Cocceius and the Pietists until it has become attached to the Scientific principles of exegesis that have been developed.<sup>1</sup>

It would be quite wrong of us to attribute to Briggs the theology of Schleiermacher. But three elements in Schleiermacher's thought are reflected in Briggs' position. First, there is the point of departure in theology, which for both Briggs and Schleiermacher is the experience in the spiritual sphere. Neither man will accept the rationalist and traditionally orthodox stance which began with objective general principles and used the deductive method. Schleiermacher describes this spiritual experience in terms of the feeling of absolute dependence. Briggs would describe it more in terms of the Testimonium Spiritus Sancti which evokes an immediate apprehension of God. Second, Schleiermacher's organic method meant that for Briggs

"it was impossible to go back to the method of Loci communes. Loci were more or less unconnected chapters on particular topics, like beads on a thread, very often loosely strung together without much effort to elicit the generative principle to which their being and their unity were due."<sup>2</sup>

The text-proofing method that allowed unconnected doctrines into a dogmatic statement were unacceptable to both writers.

"Schleiermacher worked on the conviction that a real unity can be discovered, and that each true doctrine acts and reacts on the others."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.350.

2. Mackintosh, H.R., Types of Modern Theology, Collins, London, 1964, p.65.

3. Ibid., p.65.



This was Briggs' thesis. The actual dogmas formulated were more orthodox in their statement by Briggs but their methodology was essentially the same. Third, their willingness to allow the critical method freedom without dogmatic constraint was inherent, to the empiricism of Schleiermacher as seen in his 'Critical Essays on the Gospel of St. Luke'. (1821) This was crucial to the thinking of Briggs as we shall see.

Schleiermacher was a popular mentor for many emerging American scholars as Herbst demonstrates.<sup>1</sup> Briggs was no exception.

Briggs did not formulate his understanding of Knowledge and Authority re the Scriptures in isolation. A group of his contemporaries on both sides of the Atlantic like Marcus Dods and A.B. Bruce in Britain and L.J. Evans and H.P. Smith in the U.S.A., were seeking to weave together evangelical convictions with the Critical Method, the catalyst for much of this reflection was the provocatively brilliant William Robertson Smith. His influence on Briggs has been demonstrated by Warner Bailey.<sup>2</sup> We shall lean heavily on his research.

Wm. Robertson Smith was appointed Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament at Aberdeen Free Church College in 1870. He had trained with A.B. Davidson in Scotland and Albrecht Ritschl in Germany, but it was supremely the writings of Richard Rothe and in particular his epistemology, which held that the deepest ranges of understanding were attainable through interpersonal fellowship, that influenced him.

---

1. Herbst Jorgen, The German Historical School in American Scholarship, A Study in the Transfer of Culture (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 1965, p.60, 61, 64.

2. Op.cit.



Robertson Smith, unhappy with reformed scholasticism on the one hand and the claims of scientists that religion was unnecessary on the other, used Rothe's epistemology to emphasise in the Reformers the category of the Word of God as the medium for interpersonal fellowship between God and man. His reading of Calvin and Luther was that they allowed the elementary use of criticism in order that we might stand where the Bible characters stood and so hear the Holy Spirit speaking to us again as we are drawn into fellowship with God. This was the thesis of Robertson Smith's inaugural address.<sup>1</sup>

Ritschl's comment on reading the lecture, that God's address was spoken in the context of human need which Higher Criticism describes, gave Robertson Smith the justification for holding these two elements together.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, although Briggs was showing uneasiness with the traditional orthodox line in 1870.<sup>3</sup> It was not until after Robertson Smith had published his celebrated article 'Bible' for the Encyclopaedia Britannica in 1875, which led to heresy trials in the Free Church of Scotland lasting until 1881, that Briggs began to write freely in the spirit of what became known as Evangelical Critical scholarship. It is for this reason that Bailey sees Smith as sparking the tradition of American Critical study back to life after decades of dormancy.<sup>4</sup> And Loetscher, perceives

---

1. Black and Crystal, Lectures and Essays of William Robertson Smith (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1912), pp.224-233.

2. Bailey, op.cit., p.288.

3. Briggs, C.A., Biblical Theology with especial reference to the New Testament, American Presbyterian Review, New Series, 2, (1870), pp.105-133.

4. Bailey, op.cit., p.289.

Smith as the impetus for Briggs to begin the realisation of his plan to revive American Biblical study as well as his chief authority.<sup>1</sup>

Robertson Smith's article in 1876 in the British and Foreign Evangelical Review appealed for a more widespread acceptance of higher criticism as he espoused it. This article so impressed Briggs that he not only referred favourably to it in his inaugural address as Professor of Hebrew at Union Seminary but he wrote to Smith enclosing a copy of his address and expressing a desire to know him better. Smith replied on December 28th 1877 expressing that he cordially appreciated Briggs support.<sup>2</sup> The bond between these two men was cemented when they met on Briggs' tour of Great Britain eighteen months later.

During this period discussion was taking place about the founding of a new theological journal for the Presbyterian Seminaries in the U.S.A. When the Presbyterian Review came into being, Briggs in its first year supported Robertson Smith's cause.<sup>3</sup> He described Smith's

"Unusual talent, extensive learning,  
originality of mind and independence  
of character."

He presents him as a faithful minister of the Gospel who used the tools of critical science. He argued that this man was in a position to construct as an Evangelical a critical

- 
1. Loetscher, Lefferts A., 'C.A. Briggs in the Retrospect of Half a Century', Theology Today, 12, 1955-1956, p.31.
  2. Bailey, Ibid., p.290.
  3. Briggs, C.A., The Robertson Smith Case, Presbyterian Review, 1, 1880, pp.737-745.



theory of Scripture which would remove the objections raised by science to the divine character of the Bible.

It must also be said that Briggs also took exception to elements in Smith's writings, in particular Smith's

"confident and assured statement of opinions that were strange to the British and American public as if they were unquestionable,"

and his

"bald statement of theories that were originally associated with foreign rationalists without qualifications and explanations expected from an evangelical Presbyterian in separating himself from them"

Nevertheless the substance of what Smith wrote he commended and in conclusion claimed Smith's support for three observations, which would govern his own critical work henceforth.

- "(1) Critical views of the Bible, not in conflict with the Westminster Confession should be decided by discussion by competent scholars and not in ecclesiastical proceedings.
- (2) Evangelical men should take pains not to make loose and unguarded statements and give offense and anxiety to brethren in the church.
- (3) Higher Criticism under the affirmation of the divine authority of inspiration (assured by the testimony of the Holy Spirit), can remove troublesome difficulties and can enhance 'the majesty and glory of the Bible as the holy eternal Word of God'.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Quoted in Summary by Bailey, op.cit., p.291.



Smith was initially cleared by his Church of the charge of heresy to the relief of Briggs, but when his new piece written for the Encyclopaedia Britannica on 'Hebrew Language and Literature' appeared it subsequently led to his dismissal in Scotland in the following year 1881. It was this that caused the Princeton men to be willing to debate openly the issue of the infallibility of Scripture in the Presbyterian Review.<sup>1</sup>

These series of articles which we have already alluded to in Warfield and will discuss in our exposition of Briggs were therefore written either in criticism of Smith's position or (in the case of Briggs) in defence of it.

Briggs was by no means an unquestioning disciple of Smith's. In fact he was markedly more conservative. Both argued for plenary rather than verbal inspiration, but while for Smith this meant that the mould containing the perfect word was imperfect and therefore not inspired, Briggs saw clearly the implications of inspiration for the form as well as the content. The Biblical Theology which Briggs developed was therefore an attempt to hold together the form and content, an inspired Bible which was not infallible in its details, but in its message as it spoke under the influence of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, Briggs was initially critical of Smith's statement of the Graf-Wellhausen theory re the Pentateuch, which dated the various literary strands throughout Israel's history. Briggs felt obliged to argue that all these strands were from the Mosaic age. Similarly

---

1. Bailey quotes at length correspondence between Briggs and Hodge showing this as the catalyst. Bailey, Ibid., p.292.

in discussing Smith's views of prophecy again Briggs questions the thesis of Smith that the prophets preceded the Law and disputed the Scotsman's understanding of the importance of predictive prophecy which related to the Messianic ideal. Briggs position, which was a qualification of that of Smith, earned him the epithet of one scholar of the 'Conservative heretic'.<sup>1</sup>

The tension Briggs felt in being both Evangelical and Critical we shall later indicate, but from Smith and his critical Evangelical peers he developed a stance re the Bible and the knowledge of God which is an attempt to hold together, the Critical Method of the German, the religious consciousness of Schleiermacher, the epistemology of Rothe which influenced Robertson Smith and his conservative Presbyterian tradition. The result was a view of knowledge and authority which is essentially dualistic.

The epistemological dualism of Charles Briggs can be stated like this. There are two types of knowledge. The first is empirical ; it can lead to probability ; it makes one critical and the result is always fallible. The second is Theological ; it leads to certainty ; it produces obedience and is always infallible.

"This is a critical age of the world, and recent criticisms have been stronger and more comprehensive than any previous criticisms. Criticism is a method of knowledge ; it reviews and re-examines all the processes of human thought and tests all its products. Man is fallible. Even the best of men are

---

1. Rodgers, Max Gary, 'Charles Augustus Briggs ; Conservative Heretic', (unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1964).

so liable to error that we cannot be sure of the truth of their work until we have reviewed it for ourselves and tested it at every point."<sup>1</sup>

The second he affirms as a work of the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures

"It is the teaching of the confession to which I subscribe, that the Holy Spirit when he speaks the infallible word in Holy Scripture always speaks through the Scripture to the Reason, and by his inward work in the heart, in the Reason, gives certainty, assurance, and infallible conviction of the truth and grace of God. There is no conflict between Reason and Scripture in such a case. There can be none. The Holy Spirit unites them in an infallible bond of certainty."<sup>2</sup>

It is to Briggs' view of Knowledge and Authority in the second sphere or type i.e. that of Religion we now turn.

Charles Briggs states overtly his views of Knowledge and Authority in the sphere of religion, in his Inaugural address in Union Theological Seminary, New York, January 1891.<sup>3</sup> He argues that there are three sources or

- 
1. Briggs, C., Whither? op.cit., p.278.
  2. Briggs, C., Defence before the Presbytery of New York, op.cit., p.43.
  3. Briggs, et.al., The Authority of Holy Scripture, reprinted in Inspiration and Inerrancy, James Clarke & Co., London, 1891.



fountains of Divine Authority - the Bible, the Church and the Reason. This address and its basic theses lay at the heart of the debate with Warfield and his Princeton associates. His views caused Briggs to be removed from the teaching office of his Church. We shall therefore, examine carefully his own exposition of Divine Knowledge and Authority as it is found in this Inaugural address and its subsequent qualification in lectures,<sup>1</sup> and in his defence before the Presbytery of New York while on trial.<sup>2</sup>

#### A. THE AUTHORITY OF THE REASON

By Reason, Briggs does not mean the intellectual faculty. He uses the term Reason

"in a broad sense to embrace the metaphysical categories, the conscience and the religious feeling."<sup>3</sup>

This he described as the "Holy of Holies of human nature."<sup>4</sup>

God he says guides men through their Reason whether they are conscious of His presence or not. There are, he says, some leaders and founders of a mystic type who, are conscious of the Divine presence and are certain of His

- 
1. Briggs, C., The Bible, The Church and The Reason, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1892.
  2. Briggs, C., The Defence of Prof. Briggs before the Presbytery of New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1893.
  3. Briggs, C., Authority of Holy Scripture, op.cit., p.43.
  4. Ibid., p.43.

guidance. Such he recognises may depreciate the Bible and the Church as merely external modes of finding God. He gives an example of Martineau who

"Could not find Divine authority in the Church or the Bible but he did find God enthroned in his own soul."<sup>1</sup>

Briggs does not wish to exclude these men from the company of the faithful because what is important is that they found God and Divine certainty, even though it was apart from the mediation of Church and Bible.

The starting point for Briggs' defence of this position is the teaching of the Westminster Confession of Faith that Divine grace is sovereign and free, and that although the Holy Spirit would ordinarily use the Bible, Church and Sacraments, he sometimes works apart from them.

"On this principle the Westminster Confession bases its doctrine of the salvation of elect infants and elect incapables, who from their tender age or their abnormal organisation are 'incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word.' (Westminster Confession of Faith X.3). Such are saved by Christ through the Spirit, 'who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth'. (Westminster Confession of Faith X.3)."<sup>2</sup>

Briggs admits that the implications of this are not explored by the Westminster Divines. He believes that any affirmations made consistent with the Confession but beyond their position are in a region of liberty and extra-confessional doctrine.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.44.

2. Briggs, C., Defence, op.cit., p.32.

3. Briggs, C., The Bible, The Church and The Reason, op.cit., p.29.

Briggs thesis is defended under six categories:

- (1) It is consistent with the Westminster Confession of Faith. He recognises that the introductory statement of the Confession may appear to refute it.

"Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation."<sup>1</sup>

Here Briggs distinguishes between the light of nature and the light of Grace. The former he admits to be inadequate, but the latter which he sees as the light of the eternal logos is also at work. It is, he argues, in keeping with the Quakers, the Universal Spirit<sup>2</sup> which is bearing witness to grace.

Briggs seeks to expose the weaknesses of the psychology and metaphysics of the Westminster Assembly in comparison to the advances made in Christian philosophy particularly from the period of the Cambridge Platonists.

"They could not possibly give the human reason that place and importance in the system of doctrine which every scholar must give it at the present time. It is sufficient that they have nowhere made any statement that bars the way to the doctrinal expression of the great truths and facts of modern philosophy."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Quoted in *The Bible, The Church and The Reason*, Ibid., p.30.
  2. John 1:2-13.
  3. Ibid., p.32.



What Briggs is affirming therefore is that the light of the logos informs and guides the reason. This he maintains is necessary for the doctrines of the right of private judgment, of the universal priesthood of believers, and of the immediate access of the individual Christian to God and his Saviour.<sup>1</sup>

He sets the puritan position over and against, on the one hand, those who insisted that the Church must decide on matters of doctrine, institution and ceremony, and on the other, the radicals, who denied any authority to the Church in matters not defined by Scripture. The puritans, he maintains, sought to reform the Church according to 'the only infallible rule of faith and practice' - the Scriptures, but nevertheless recognised

"that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Lord, which are always to be observed."<sup>2</sup>

According to Briggs, therefore the Westminster Divines gave the human reason authority in questions of religion where the Scriptures do not decide.

In their stating of the doctrine of Scripture, for Briggs the Westminster Divines in arguing the need for

---

1. Ibid., p.33.

2. Westminster Confession of Faith 1:6 - cited, Ibid., p.34.

"the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts."<sup>1</sup>

to persuade us of the authority of Scripture in saying that the objective authority of Holy Scripture is not enough.

"It has subjective authority also, in that the Divine Spirit enters the soul of the man to convince his reason, sway his conscience, and assure his religious feeling that God is indeed speaking to him. Unless the Holy Spirit bears witness in our heart, we can never be assured of the Divine authority of Holy Scripture; unless the Holy Spirit enters the reason and conscience, and speaks with the same voice there as in Holy Scripture, there can be no rational faith or conscientious obedience to the Word of God."<sup>2</sup>

Again, in Chapter 18 of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Briggs observes the reason being enlightened by the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit in the bringing of the faithful to the full assurance of hope. It causes him to ask the question -

"How can there be assurance of grace without the assurance of the reason by the authority of God."<sup>3</sup>

- (2) Holy Scripture teaches that the Reason is a great fountain of Divine Authority.

- 
1. Westminster Confession of Faith 1:5 cited, Ibid., p.35.
  2. Ibid., p.36.
  3. Ibid., p.36.

The Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament ignores the institutions and sacred writings of Israel. There is in them no reference to Church or Bible. They appeal directly and consistently to the human reason. The Wisdom Literature of the New Testament in Hebrew, the letters of John and Colossians are uniform in this regard.

"The Christian knowledge so grandly set forth in these writings, is a knowledge that the soul gains through the witness of the Divine Spirit,<sup>1</sup> within the forms of the reason."

As an illustration he quotes the Apostle John:

"Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gives us."<sup>2</sup>

Bible history reinforces Briggs' thesis. It shows, he says, God appearing to the Monarchs of Egypt, Philistia and Babylon, apart from Bible or Church God's spirit was working similarly in Melchizedek, in Jethro, Abel, Enoch and Noah.

Briggs traces the development of the Church through Theophanies and dreams without Church or Bible in Abraham and Moses, in prophets and Apostles. All were confronted by God addressing them in 'the Reason' and convincing them to act.

Briggs infers:

"Deny that the Reason is a fountain of Divine Authority, and you thereby deny that the Church and the Bible are fountains of Divine

---

1. Ibid., p.38.

2. 1 John 3:24.



Authority, for there never could, have been any such thing as Bible and Church without the Reason."<sup>1</sup>

- (3) The condition of the world shows that the Reason is a great fountain of Divine Authority.

Briggs contends that since the Christian Church consists of a minority in the world, it is inconceivable that a thousand million of the human race be reprobate, on the basis that they cannot or will not use the means of grace. The love of God makes it unacceptable.

"The grace of God through the universal working of the Divine Spirit and the omnipresence of the eternal Logos is<sub>2</sub> operative to save in all the earth."

- (4) The nature of man shows that the Reason is a great fountain of Divine Authority.

By this Briggs means the Conscience of man. For, he says, unless it speaks with divine authority there is no basis for morality. This is a universal phenomenon which constitutes man as a moral being and makes virtuous improvement possible. This conscience Briggs identifies with the universal religious instinct through which God has been speaking.

"We cannot explain the centuries during which the mass of mankind have been excluded from Christianity; we

---

1. Ibid., p.43.

2. Ibid., p.47.

cannot explain the religions of the world, unless, in a measure, we acknowledge that in some way the Divine Spirit has been guiding the founders and the reformers of those religions, in that historical development which is the divine training of mankind."<sup>1</sup>

- (5) Church history shows that the Reason is a great fountain of Divine Authority.

Briggs demonstrates the Divine Spirit at work in the Church enabling the reason to interpret the Bible and formulate creeds and confessions. He argues for those leaders of the Church who had immediate communion with God, in the form of their reason and encouraged the removal of the stumbling-blocks of the Church which were in the way to immediate access to God. For this he applauds the reformers. He then contrasts the Protestant scholastics, whom he sees erecting barriers around the Bible with their dogmas about the Bible so hindering free communion with God, with the Rationalists like Martineau.

"Rationalism is historically the re-affirmation of the independence of the conscience and the reason, and of immediate communion with God."<sup>2</sup>

With Rationalism being a necessary corrective to scholastic Protestantism, Briggs sees no reason why the word of Martineau cannot be accepted,

". . . that he could not find divine authority in the Church or the Bible, but did find God enthroned in his own soul."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.50.

2. Ibid., p.51.

3. Ibid., p.53.

God therefore has in the past and may still grant certitude to men apart from the traditional means of grace.

- (6) Christian experience shows that the Reason is a great fountain of Divine Authority.

Briggs does not merely argue that prayer and meditation is possible apart from the Bible and the Church, but that the teachings of the Church and the Bible e.g. the indwelling Spirit, the present reigning Christ, and immanence of God are realised and experienced in the forms of the Reason. It is by the Divine Authority in the forms of the Reason that the believer is assured of all that God has promised him in Jesus Christ.

"The religion of the Church, and the Bible must become the religion of the reason, in order that it may become the master principle of the man, and rule him from the centre to the circumference of his being."<sup>1</sup>

In order to hold together Briggs' understanding of Reason as a fountain of Divine Authority it is necessary to allow him to further qualify his position in answer to the charges levelled against him.

First, in response to the charge against him presented to the New York Presbytery which stated:

". . . that the reason is a fountain of divine authority which may and does savingly enlighten men, even such men as reject the Scriptures as the authoritative proclamation

---

1. Ibid., p.56.



of the will of God, and reject also the way of salvation through the mediation and sacrifice of the Son of God as revealed therein."<sup>1</sup>

To this Briggs responded bluntly:

"They do not prove and they cannot prove from the Inaugural that I teach that men who reject the Scriptures and the salvation through Jesus Christ are savingly enlightened by the Reason or by the Church."<sup>2</sup>

Second, in answer to the allegations that by arguing for Reason as a fountain of Divine Authority he is undermining the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and obedience, Briggs states that Reason is not a rule<sup>3</sup> or an infallible rule of faith and obedience but nevertheless a fountain of authority.

Briggs position is essentially this:

God, not by the light of nature, but by the omnipresent eternal logos, immediately acts in authority on the Reason of all men. The Reason includes the metaphysical categories, the conscience and the religious feelings. It is therefore possible to be constrained by Divine Authority apart from the Church and the Bible but not in violation of the authority of God in the Church and the Bible. The authority and knowledge of God through the Church and the Bible must be made subjective by the immediate activity of God in the Reason.

---

1. Professor Briggs, Defence, op.cit., p.30.

2. Ibid., p.31.

3. See Section on Co-Ordinating the Three Fountains.

B. THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH

Briggs begins this argument with the words

"The majority of Christians from the apostolic age have found God through the Church."<sup>1</sup>

By this he means people have been given the certainty of God's presence and his authority in the institutional expression of Christianity. He sees Protestants shunning such a possibility because the authority of Popes and prelates have become so enveloped with "human conceits and follies",<sup>2</sup> as to make the experience unattainable.

A contemporary illustration of one who found God through the Church was J.H. Newman, who found certainty through the Church when he had failed to achieve this through the Bible or Reason.

Briggs would seek to defend this position under seven categories.

(1) This is the Westminster Doctrine of the Church

Briggs saw the puritan party in their agitation for reform repudiating the authority of Monarch and prelates over Christ's heritage; but, he maintains, they asserted strongly the Divine Authority of the Church of God. This he illustrates from the Westminster Confession of Faith.

(a) In the Westminster Confession of Faith XXX.1.2;

Briggs sees taught the Church as a foundation of Divine Authority. Here is affirmed that Jesus Christ has

---

1. Inaugural Address, op.cit., p.41.

2. Ibid., p.42.

appointed a government in the hand of Church officers. To these have been given the Keys of the Kingdom - a power to exercise discipline in the Church. Briggs infers from this:

"Unless the members of Presbyteries, Synods, and the General Assembly have been called to their high office by the authority of Jesus Christ, speaking to them first in their own reasons in the internal call, and then through the authority of the Church in the external call of ordination, they are no courts of Jesus Christ . . . They are usurping the crown rights of Jesus Christ, which he has given only to his Church, if with their voice they deny the divine authority of the Church, and in their acts endeavour to exercise that authority."<sup>1</sup>

- (b) The Westminster Confession of Faith XXV, 2-3 ; teaches that the Church is the Kingdom of Christ.

"He reigns over it, he inhabits it by his Spirit, He makes its institutions efficacious, He grants access to himself through his Church."<sup>2</sup>

To accept this, says Briggs, is to accept the Church as a fountain of Divine Authority.

- (c) The teaching of the Confession on the sacraments (XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX), are, says Briggs, that they are divine institutions, having divine authority. In them is the presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit. They are means of grace. They are therefore fountains of Divine Authority.

---

1. Briggs., The Bible, The Church and the Reason, op.cit., p.14.  
 2. Ibid., p.16.



(2) This is the Teaching of Holy Scripture

Jesus statement to Peter (Matt. 16:18, 19) on the building of his church and the giving of the keys, however it is to be interpreted, gives to the Church authority. Paul's statement in Eph. 2:20, 21 of Christians being built upon the foundation of Apostles and prophets, exhibits their authority. The mystic images of Christ, the head and the Church, the body; Christ, the vine, the disciples, the branches; Christ, the husband, the Church the bride, etc. reveal the Church as a fountain of Divine Authority where the power and grace and efficacy of Jesus is experienced in communion with him.

(3) It is in Keeping with the Condition of the World.

The great majority of nominal Christians in the Roman and Orthodox Churches, do not know the Scriptures and are encouraged to find God through the Church. Are we to say, says Briggs, that these churchmen, including Newman, are deceived when they claim to have found divine certainty apart from the Bible?

(4) Church History shows this Truth

Prior to the Reformation, the Bible was a virtuous book to the people at large. Men sought and found God in the Church. To deny that the Church is a fountain of Divine Authority would be to blot out of existence the Church before the Reformation.

(5) Biblical History reveals the Authority of the Church

The Church antedates the Bible. Apart from the Church being a fountain of Divine Authority there would be no Bible. Both in the Old and New Testaments the

Church was trained and prepared to be the matrix of the written Scriptures.

"Indeed, it was necessary that the Church should be inhabited of God and his Spirit, and be filled with the divine authority of Jesus Christ, or the Holy Scriptures could never have been written, would never have been collected, would never have been preached, and would never have exerted their divine influence upon the children of men."<sup>1</sup>

(6) Christian Experience shows the Church to be a Fountain of Divine Authority

When Christians assemble for worship and the sacraments, Christ is really present exercising his authority in the Church. Dogma may produce dead orthodoxy unless energised by the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is supremely in the ministry of the Word and sacraments, when the Bible is in the hands of the Church, that it is the power of God unto salvation. For the authority of God speaks in the Scriptures and his authority speaking in the Church produces a harmony of impact.<sup>2</sup>

(7) Prophetically, the Church is a Great Fountain of Divine Authority

Briggs proceeds to quote from the Old Testament prophets who envisaged the New Kingdom centred in Jerusalem. This following the writers of the New Testament, he understands to be fulfilled through Christ and his Church.

---

1. Ibid., p.21.

2. Ibid., pp.22-23.

This Church will yet see, in his claim, the exercise of Divine Authority in her midst as the Church responds to the New Age.

The charge against Briggs from the Presbytery of New York was that he taught that

"the Church is a fountain of divine authority, which apart from the Holy Scripture, may and does savingly enlighten men."<sup>1</sup>

Those responsible for the charges specified what they meant:

"Dr. Briggs affirms that, in the case of some, the Holy Scriptures are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will, which is necessary unto salvation, even though they strive never so hard; and that such persons, setting aside the supreme authority of the Word of God, can obtain that saving knowledge of him through the Church."<sup>2</sup>

Briggs denies totally that this is what he is teaching and in his refutation of this we see a distinction in his thinking important in his understanding of the authority of God. The prosecution had been incensed by his use of Cardinal Newman as an illustration of one who was unable to reach certainty through the Bible or Reason.

Briggs in response argues that he did not say that Newman did not obtain saving knowledge through the Bible and that the Church savingly enlightened him apart from the Bible.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Briggs., Defence, op.cit., p.76.

2. Ibid., p.76.

3. Ibid., p.77.



His case is that he used Newman as one who found the Church as a fountain of Divine Authority in that it brought him to certainty, or what the Westminster Confession of Faith calls 'infallible assurance'.<sup>1</sup> He therefore, following the Westminster Divines, wishes to distinguish saving enlightenment which is necessary to salvation and certainty 'which is not of the essence of faith'.<sup>2</sup> The Confession of Faith specifically teaches that this certainty is more than the Scriptures by themselves can accomplish.

Again Briggs finds it necessary to distinguish the nature of the Church as a fountain of authority from the Bible as an infallible rule.

"The Church is not an infallible rule of faith."<sup>3</sup>

He summarises his understanding of Church authority:

". . . divine authority speaks to us through Holy Church in all the forms of divine worship, in sacred praise, in public prayer, in the solemn reading of the divine Word and in the preaching of the gospel.

Have you not felt the thrill of the divine touch, the ecstasy of the divine presence, and the rest of submission to and acquiescence in the divine authority impressing itself with irresistible weight and conviction of certainty when assembled with God's people in public worship?"<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. Westminster Confession of Faith, XVIII, 3.
  2. Westminster Confession of Faith, XVIII, 3.
  3. Ibid., p.74.
  4. Ibid., p.73.

### C. THE AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

This is the main concern of our analysis of the writings of Charles Briggs. At this stage, his position on the infallible authority of Scripture will be stated briefly. The primary interest in this section will be the relationship of this infallible rule with the other fountains of authority.

Briggs recognises that evangelical Protestants, like the Baptist Spurgeon have depreciated the Church and the Reason over and against the authority of Scripture. Briggs wants to recognise all three as avenues to God. He is particularly concerned that the authority of God in Holy Scripture has been obscured by the traditions of men. He compares the behaviour of scholastic Protestants with that of the Popes and Councils which concealed the word of God. The creeds, dogmas and ecclesiastical decisions of these Protestants, are for Briggs, substitutes for the authority of God himself. By scholastic dogma, he means 'Verbal Inspiration', Apostolic accreditation for Canoncity, Inerrancy, etc. These will be considered later.

Briggs is seeking to avoid in these scholastic defences of Biblical Authority an authority which is not direct and immediate in the bringing of the believer to certainty. It is therefore for Briggs the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures which is the authority of God.

"It is not Holy Scripture which is the supreme Judge, it is the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit alone. Holy Scripture is that in which the Holy Spirit speaks, and he speaks bearing witness by and with the word in the heart of the believer. The Holy Spirit speaks to the reason of the godly man through Holy Scripture and gives him the ultimate decision in all matters of faith and practice."<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Briggs, Defence, op.cit., p.42.



In what sense then is the Holy Scriptures, for Briggs, an infallible rule of faith? It does not offer us a specific creed or liturgy. It is diverse in its content and emphasis. The rule, he says, may be formulated by studying the Scriptures, but this external rule is not the internal rule of the Scriptures themselves.<sup>1</sup>

"The Scripture rule is in the passages which speak plainly and unmistakably the lessons of life and salvation. These lessons of Holy Scripture were not only divine when given to the prophets in the forms of their reason, but they remained divine when constructed by these prophets under the guidance of the divine Spirit into those marvellous forms of literary expression which we find in our Bible. The divine instruction remains the same in whatever language or literary expression it may be subsequently translated. We deny that it was necessary that infallibility should extend to the words or the literary expressions, or to the circumstantial details and historic occasions, but we claim that the rule of faith and life itself as written was, and ever remains, the infallible divine guidance."<sup>2</sup>

This he claims, to be the only infallible rule, in contrast with Roman Catholicism which incorporates with the Scriptural rule, the traditions of the Church. For Briggs tradition

". . . is nothing more than Christian experience in its historical evolution."<sup>3</sup>

He does not believe such tradition unimportant but secondary.

- 
1. Briggs, C., The Bible, The Church and the Reason, op.cit., p.75.
  2. Ibid., p.75.
  3. Ibid., p.77.



Compare the Scriptures with the creeds and confessions of the Church; with the best systems of doctrine; with the masterpieces of piety;

"Holy Scripture, the one only sovereign rule of faith and life, is simpler and grander, more comprehensive and more inspiring than any other rule which man can frame."<sup>1</sup>

The content of this rule in the plain passages which speak clearly, we shall examine more carefully later. However for a balanced picture in this section it is necessary to mention the area of his emphasis. For Briggs, the content of this rule is the Theology of the Bible.

"Here, if anywhere, the Divine Authority will be found."<sup>2</sup>

Religion: By which he means Theophanies and institutions of worship; doctrines of faith; by which he means the doctrines of God, man and redemption; and Biblical Ethics! All these essentials in the rule of faith have their unity in Jesus Christ.

"Jesus Christ is the master of the Bible. All its avenues lead to the Messiah and his Kingdom."<sup>3</sup>

Briggs would seek to harmonise in his thought the three fountains of Divine Authority, but first his understanding of what is a fountain of authority must be clarified.

1. Ibid., p.82.
2. The Authority of Holy Scripture, op.cit., p.65.
3. The Bible, The Church and The Reason, op.cit., p.82.

Briggs conceives of all language being more or less symbolical; therefore when one begins to speak of profound truth some reflection will be required for understanding.

There are, he says, synonymous expressions for "Fountain of Authority", like 'seat of Authority', 'source of Authority', 'medium of Authority'. But, these will only set forth the doctrine in part and logical inferences drawn from them will be invalid. The problem is not only therefore with the symbolical nature of language but that this truth

"transcends human powers of comprehension and expression."<sup>1</sup>

Consider, he says, synonymous terms, e.g. Martineau's use of 'Seat of Authority in Religion'. The seat is that on which God enthrones himself when he speaks with divine authority to men. The seat is not the authority, as the throne is not the monarch. God therefore enters the forms of the Reason to us it as his seat from which he exercises his authority. Similarly when the Church is said to be the source of Divine Authority, it is not taught that the Church is the original source of Divine Authority apart from God. The primitive meaning of source, argues Briggs, is that from which anything rises or springs. In these terms the source does not constitute the authority but transmits it.<sup>2</sup> This was obviously an area of contention with those opposed to his position. In the course of the debate before his Presbytery Briggs said:

---

1. Ibid., p.57.

2. Ibid., p.58.



"I have just received a question in regard to the matter I have passed over, which, in accordance with my promise, I will first answer.

'Would you kindly give me your interpretation of the word fountain as you use it, and oblige?'

I thought I had done this, but it seems exceedingly difficult to make my meaning plain. I use 'fountain' not in the sense of the original source; because as I have said, God alone is the original source. But I use 'fountain' in the figurative sense, as that out of which the waters flow, synonymous with 'channel' and 'medium'. God is the only original source. The Bible, the Church, and the Reason are channels, means of grace, by which God communicates his Divine authority to men. I hope I have made myself plain."<sup>1</sup>

Briggs would seek to justify his use of the term fountain from Scripture where not only God but wisdom are said to be 'well-springs of life'<sup>2</sup> from historic usage as in the Council of Trent but perhaps most specifically in the Christian Dogmatics of Van Oosterzee who, says Briggs

". . . represents that Holy Scripture is the focus primarius of truth, the the confessional writings of the Church the focus secundarius, the Christian consciousness the focus internus."<sup>3</sup>

How the three fountains of Divine Authority - the Bible, the Church and the Reason - relate is crucial for Briggs understanding of religious knowledge and authority.

- 
1. Quoted by A. Stranger, The Trial of Dr. Briggs before the General Assembly, Anson D.F. Randolph and Co., New York, 1893, p.44.
  2. Prov. 16:22.
  3. The Bible, The Church and The Reason, op.cit., p.61.



Briggs in his Inaugural address stated that there ought to be no contradiction between the three centres of, Divine Authority.

"They ought to be complementary, and they should combine in a higher unity for the guidance and the comfort of men."<sup>1</sup>

This with his earlier statement that the means whereby men found God was influenced by their temperments and environments<sup>2</sup> caused Briggs to be accused of co-ordinating Bible, Church and Reason as fountains of authority. By co-ordinating Briggs meant holding these authorities

"on the same level, in the same order, of equal, independent authority."<sup>3</sup>

This he vehemently denies he is teaching. In the Evangelical and the Rationalist respectively, he shows how each in turn rejects any notion of co-ordination.

The question is therefore - How do these sources of authority relate?

In setting out his position, Briggs wished to do so as a Protestant, holding to the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. To do so Briggs must establish his position, over and against Roman Catholicism which places tradition on an equal place with Holy Scripture and makes the Pope (ex cathedra) the supreme judge; over and

---

1. Inaugural Address, op.cit., p.95.

2. Ibid., p.46.

3. Quoted in Defence, op.cit., p.82.

over and against Rationalism which would make Reason the supreme test and over and against Protestant scholasticism and Anglo-Catholicism, both of which would seek to establish a rule of faith exterior to the Bible.

Before Briggs may show how these fountains may be harmonised, he must relate each to the other. His understanding will be outlined under four categories.

(1) The Relation of Reason to the Scriptures

"The Reason gives no rule of faith."<sup>1</sup>

The Reason is seen to respond and give directions to specific issues. The forms of the Reason exert authority. The Conscience and religious feeling cannot be questioned. The fundamental laws of thought demand implicit obedience. The metaphysical categories are the limits of man's intellectual powers and cannot be transcended. Bible and Church therefore must enter the spheres of the reason if influence is to be exerted. The Church and the Bible have no divine warrant to violate the autonomy of the Reason. Reason will not bend for ecclesiastics or dogmaticians if what is being demanded is contrary to the laws of thought, to metaphysical categories and outrages the conscience or religious feelings. The Bible and Church gain the consent of Reason by being true and right.

This, says Briggs, would be accepted by Roman Catholics, Anglo-Catholics and Protestants alike.

---

1. The Bible, The Church and The Reason, op.cit., p.66.

What then of those instances when there is apparent conflict? Which fountain does one follow? For the Roman Catholic, the Church will decide, but, says Briggs, for the Protestant, when the Church is in antagonism with Reason it is not under divine authority but under the influence of ecclesiasticism, and when Scripture is in conflict with Reason, we may conclude that its meaning has been perverted by Dogmatism. He instances the reformers attitude to Transubstantiation which was for them contrary to Reason; and ~~the~~ their statement of the 'Real Presence of Christ' in the Eucharist which was fought on the basis of being mysterious but not in violation of ~~the~~ Reason. He cites also the response of men to the view of damming unbaptised children which causes revolt in the conscience and religious feeling.

"No doctrine can ever maintain its ground when it is condemned by conscience, or the religious feeling, or any of the forms of the human reason."<sup>1</sup>

When there is conflict between dogma and Reason, it is necessary, says Briggs, to re-examine the dogma to see whether it be Catholic or Biblical and to re-examine the grounds of resistance to see if human reasoning and human prejudices have clouded the Reason.

"But if the Reason persists in opposition, refuses to recognise the truth and right of the dogma, and shrinks from it as false and wrong; we may be sure that the reason is giving a divine decision . . . Experience shows that the voice of God speaking in the Reason

---

1. The Bible, The Church and The Reason, Ibid., p.68.



is invariably right, and that the decisions of the Reason eventually are shown to agree with Scripture against tradition."<sup>1</sup>

Briggs is at pains to point out that by Reason he does not mean human reasoning, human conception, or human imagination. These human operations of the mind lead to uncertainty and are fallible. Neither is he arguing that Revelation must conform to the patterns of human understanding. He recognises that much in Scripture is transcendent of human thought. Human reasoning may probe and enquire but may not dictate what is to be revealed.

The Reason has a divine authority it is:

"not alien to the authority of Bible and Church, but which is so necessary that without it they could not accomplish their divine purpose."<sup>2</sup>

## (2) The Relation of the Scripture to the Reason

"The Reason does not give a revelation from God in the form of a rule, whether in concrete or abstract forms, whether written or unwritten."<sup>3</sup>

For Briggs, even if the decisions of the Reason were remembered and formulated by individuals or collectively, they could not claim divine authority ~~and~~ assert for them infallibility unless divine authority be given in collection and composition.

---

1. Ibid., p.68.

2. Ibid., p.71.

3. Ibid., p.71.

Briggs observes the view of Rationalists that such rules and those of the Scriptures and the Church were made up like the rules of any other religion. He wants to go further than that and say that although many sacred books are the products of the human mind under the guidance of God speaking to men through the Reason, other writers including the prophets of Israel

" . . . were not only guided through their Reason as were other men, but that they had a special divine guidance which made them the teachers of mankind; and therefore not only in their Reasons but also in their conceptions and in their imaginations; in their speaking and writing as religious teachers, they were divinely guided; and that their words and writings have divine authority."<sup>1</sup>

Briggs does not wish to exclude from the outset, from this category all books of the East outside of Holy Scripture. He will test them by Reason and Historical Criticism. They are not valueless but generally speaking in comparison to the blazing sun of Holy Scripture, they are flickering torches.

### (3) The Relation of the Church to the Bible

One of the battle grounds of the Reformation was this area of relative authority. Briggs, naturally, sides with the Protestants. The authority of the Bible over and against the authority of the Church is stated in two areas. First in his siding with the reformers who denied the Church's authority to determine and to define the Canon of Holy Scripture, He quotes extensively from the reformers and the Reformed Confessions with which he concerns to affirm the doctrine of:

---

1. Ibid., p.72.

" . . . the independent sovereign authority of Holy Scripture as sufficient of itself to convince, assure and give infallible certainty to men as regards its own authority . . . "1

The divine authority of the Scriptures is God himself speaking in them. The Church as a community of Christians recognises this authority and sits under it.

Briggs' understanding of canonicity is worthy of separate analysis, but suffice to say that for him any attempt to justify canonicity on historical grounds, as does Warfield, is to rob the Scriptures of their divine authority and certainty.

Second, in his insisting, contrary to Roman Catholic dogma, that the Church has not divine authority in the interpretation of Holy Scripture. For Briggs, Scripture is its own interpreter and ~~the~~ the meaning of Scripture in difficult passages is to be determined by the meaning of places that speak clearly on the subject.

Briggs therefore sees the Scriptures being rescued from the hands of ecclesiastics.

"Scripture is its own interpreter to every conscientious student. The Reason, the conscience, human prudence and judgment must be freely and fully employed in searching the Scriptures, for God will fill all these faculties of human nature with their appropriate holy contents of grace from the inexhaustible fountain of the Word of God itself."2

---

1. Ibid., p.4.

2. Ibid., p.12.



(4) The Relation of the Bible to the Church

The Church in which is found the presence of God is a source of his authority. The Holy Scriptures do not remove from the Church its authority. The Church's authority is exercised through its institutions. The Scriptures authority is exercised through its writings.

"Both alike are original and independent fountains of grace. The Church is not founded on Holy Scripture, but upon Christ and his Apostles. The Holy Scripture is not the gift of the Church, but of Christ through holy men inspired by the Holy Spirit."<sup>1</sup>

For Briggs, the error of Romanism is to make the Church the master of Scripture and the error of Protestantism, is to make the Scriptures master of the Church. Christ is to be the only master. These means of grace must be kept independent under the Messiah. They are not however to act apart but as help

"Holy Scripture is the magna charta of the Church - and the Church should be the mirror of Holy Scripture."<sup>2</sup>

The authority of the Church to preach, to administer the sacraments, to exercise discipline - antedates the New Testament. If the New Testament had not been written the Church's authority would still stand. The Scriptures unlike the Church is an infallible guide.

---

1. Ibid., p.83.

2. Ibid., p.84.

It is Briggs' concern that there ought to be no contradiction between the three centres of authority.<sup>1</sup>

"They ought to be complementary and they should combine in a higher unity for the guidance and the comfort of men."<sup>2</sup>

This unity or harmony is found in Christ, the eternal logos.<sup>3</sup> Prior to the Incarnation he enlightened the Reason of men. His presence was made visible in the man Christ Jesus, but since the Ascension he grants his invisible presence to his Church. Over this Church he reigns. He has given to it the Scriptures. Christ is the centre of Scripture. The centre of grace and source of life in the Church is Christ. The Living Christ as judge and Saviour rights all wrongs, clears all mysteries and the human Reason finds in him its centre.

"As Christ stands forth from Holy Scripture, and is mirrored in Baptism, in the Lord's supper, in the holy ministry, and in the holy worship and charities of the Church - the Reason recognises him as its satisfaction, its comfort, its joy and everlasting blessedness."<sup>4</sup>

Briggs again affirms that there are three ways of access to God and that the determining factors in terms of which one used is temperament and environment. Those in the Latin World or in the Middle Ages are encouraged by their environment to find God in the Church. Protestants are encouraged to seek him through the Bible. In the heathen world

---

1. Authority of Scripture, op.cit., p.95.

2. Ibid., p.95.

3. The Bible, The Church and The Reason, op.cit., p.84.

3. Ibid., p.85.

environment demands that he may only be found through the forms of the Reason. As with environment, so with temperaments. It is not however indifferent which way is pursued. The Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and practice. However

"no man can attain the heights of religious development until he has used the three fountains in harmony."<sup>1</sup>

By seeking to keep each source of authority separate and independent and united only in Christ's exercise of his sovereign authority, Briggs finds it difficult to state systematically the nature of the relationship apart from their being in support of each other. The nearest he comes to it is when he is expounding Martineau's phrase 'Seat of Authority in religion'. He writes:

". . . in order to make divine authority known to men, it is necessary that God should enter the forms of the Reason, either immediately by the direct contact of the divine spirit with the human spirit, or immediately through the divine institutions of Church and Bible."<sup>2</sup>

Here one sees the first glimmerings of a logical connection.

Some seventeen years later after having been removed from the teaching office in the Presbyterian Church, Briggs took up again the subject of Authority in Religion in the context of a series of lectures on what was known as Christian Irenics. According to the preface, his delay in publishing was due to his desiring to make a thorough investigation of, among other areas, that of infallibility.

---

1. Ibid., p.88.

2. Ibid., p.58.



A chapter is devoted to dealing with infallibility with respect to the three fountains of divine authority. It is therefore crucial for our understanding of Briggs' view of the infallibility of Holy Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

Briggs starting point is the statement:

"In the last analysis, truth in religion rests upon authority and certainty upon infallibility."<sup>2</sup>

In so far as the fountains of divine authority impart certainty, they must do so infallibly. This infallible authority is necessary, because in religion everything depends upon God and what he would have men be and do. In the Reason he speaks within a man. In the Bible he speaks in sacred records. In the Church he speaks in divine institutions.

"In fact, through all history men have been made certain of their possession of divine life and truth by divine voices speaking through these media."<sup>3</sup>

The question then is in what sense are these sources of authority infallible guides? The principles of infallible authority govern the three alike, he says, with criticism in its various forms compelling the investigations.

"The solution of the problem of any one of them is so involved in the problem of the others that the final solution will be the solution of them all."<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. Briggs, C., 'Church Unity, Studies of its Most Important Problems', Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1910.
  2. Ibid., p.222.
  3. Ibid., p.222.
  4. Ibid., p.223.

Briggs therefore considers the infallibility of each of the fountains of authority in turn.

### 1. The Infallibility of the Reason

By the Reason, Briggs does not mean the reasoning powers of man. He has in mind the innate forms upon which all reasoning depends, those functions which are prior to experience and which determine thought, morality and religion. There is the metaphysical Reason which limits and defines intellectual activity. There is the moral Reason, or conscience, which gives decisions in morality. There is the religious Reason which unites man with God and speaks in the religious sphere.<sup>1</sup>

In stating his position Briggs limits his discussions to the moral and religious Reason. In what sense and to what extent is it infallible?

He makes four qualifying statements about the moral and religious Reason. First, the conscience does not decide abstract questions of what might be right or wrong. Second, concrete questions with a moral involvement are of no concern to the conscience. Third, practical questions which involve others than ourselves is beyond its authority. The conscience judges the individual. Fourth, the conscience speaks to the individual at the time of moral and religious action and decides with final authority.<sup>2</sup>

The authority of the conscience is infallible. But what of its inconsistencies? Does the conscience not decide different courses of action for different people? Does it not diverse answers to the same questions at different times in the same person? This, says Briggs, is not the

---

1. Ibid., p.223.

2. Ibid., p.224.

fault of the conscience. It does not impeach its infallible authority for the differences are due to differing circumstances which envelop the case. If we misrepresent our case at the court of conscience, or if we neglect it we cannot blame the conscience. The infallible voice of God in the conscience will always guide us aright when we desire unreservedly to be guided.

He cites the Westminster Confession of Faith as illustrating the infallible decision of the Holy Spirit in the assurance of faith; the witness of the Holy Spirit within our spirits that we are the children of God.<sup>1</sup> This he says, is a specific infallible decision for the individual, but it is not an infallible rule for himself or for others.<sup>2</sup>

He concludes this section by recognising that religion cannot be based upon Christian consciousness, or Christian experience, or the results of the reasoning powers, or the decisions of ordinary moral judgments - for they give only probability not certainty. They are not authoritative.

"The only religious experience that is authoritative and infallible is that which the conscience and the religious feeling give us, in innate apriori, immediate decisions, the voice of God himself within us, where doubt and uncertainty are impossible."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 18:2.

2. Ibid., p.226.

3. Ibid., p.226.



## 2. The Infallibility of the Church

Briggs divides the Church into three groups. First, the Greek and Oriental Churches who recognise the infallibility of Ecumenical Councils. Second, the Roman Catholics who limit infallibility to the decrees of the Councils approved by the Pope, plus the decrees of Popes made under certain defined circumstances. Third, the Protestants who claim divine authority for their own institutions and doctrines but deny infallibility to Popes and Councils.

The Protestant position is for Briggs uncertain and inconsistent. If, as the Westminster Confession teaches,

"the presence of Christ and his Spirit makes effectual the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God unto the Church."<sup>1</sup>

is not this action of Christ and his Spirit divine, certain and infallible? Similarly if in effectual calling, the Spirit uses the means of grace and ordinances of the Church to bring men to salvation, does not this effectual enlightenment imply infallibility?

It is here Briggs sees the Westminster divines being inconsistent in stating that since Synods and Councils err, they are not to be used as a rule of faith and practice but as a help in both.<sup>2</sup> Briggs' understanding of subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith is that it is binding upon all ministers of the Presbyterian Church.<sup>3</sup> In spite of subscription being said to be 'the system of doctrine

1. Westminster Confession of Faith 25:3.

2. Westminster Confession of Faith 31:11

3. Ibid., p.227.

contained in Holy Scripture', Briggs interprets subscription in practice to mean that the Westminster Confession gives a final and authoritative interpretation of Holy Scripture and no-one can appeal from the Confession to the Scriptures as a higher authority against it.

"The Presbyterian Churches, in fact, just as truly as the Roman Catholic Church, require their ministers to accept the Holy Scriptures 'according to that sense which our holy Mother Church has held, and does hold, to which it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Scriptures.....'. The Protestant Churches grant liberty of conscience, to deny the infallible authority of the Church, with one hand, and take it back with the other."<sup>1</sup>

Briggs is assured that there is in the Church divine authority, and if divine then certain and infallible. The question is then, where is this authority lodged, and how extensive is it in form and substance?

Insofar as the Roman Catholic Church had sought to grapple with this problem, its understanding must be of help, says Briggs. At the first Vatican Council it defined what it had implicitly believed but was unclear as to its nature. He understands the statement of the Roman Catholic Church to be a "wholesome advance".<sup>2</sup>

He quotes the dogmas as defined.

"It is a dogma divinely revealed: that the Roman pontiff when discharging the Office of Pastor and Teacher of all Christians, by reason of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines

---

1. Ibid., p.228.

2. Ibid., p.228.



a doctrine regarding Faith and Morals to be held by the whole Church, he by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, possesses that infallibility with which the Blessed Redeemer willeth that his Church should be endowed, in defining doctrines regarding Faith and Morals, and therefore such definitions of the said Roman Pontiff are of themselves inalterable and not from the consent of the Church."<sup>1</sup>

Briggs, in light of Roman Catholic authorities expounds this Catholic dogma under seven headings, all of which qualify the Roman Catholic Church's view of infallibility.

- (1) Infallibility is limited to 'a doctrine regarding Faith and Morals'. All else is excluded and may be changed.
- (2) The doctrines are limited to those 'held by the whole Church', that is they are universal in character and not the opinions or dogmas of a few teachers, which would exclude most of the dogmas of Scholastic Theology.
- (3) The clause 'to be held by the whole Church' implies not just the clergy but by the people. That is they must be doctrines the people believe are necessary for their salvation. They will not therefore be theoretical but practical dogmas. The clause also implies that the definition is in response to needs experienced in the whole Church. That is the consent of the Church is that guidance be given so that the infallible decree is not without reference to the consent of the Church but is not determined by it.
- (4) Infallibility is limited to a doctrine regarding faith and morals which the Roman Pontiff defines. The dogmas of Councils, theologians and Fathers have no infallible authority. His area of definition is quite limited comparable to the confessions of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., pp.228-229.

2. Ibid., p.230.



- (5) Infallibility is not in the Pope as a person, but as an official when discharging his Apostolic Authority, i.e. under the immediate guidance of the divine Spirit. Only one such definition had been made in the days of Briggs and that was concerning, 'the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin.'<sup>1</sup>
- (6) Infallibility is limited to the definition of dogmas divinely revealed in Holy Scripture and in Apostolic tradition. No new dogmas may be promulgated, only that which is in accordance with the definitions of all the previous Popes (who acted infallibly).
- (7) "The infallible definition is limited to the doctrine itself, and it is not extended to the formula in which the doctrine is expressed. All human language is fallible. At the best, language is an inadequate vehicle of thought. The doctrine is as infallible in one language as in another, in translations as in the original tongue in which it was defined . . . If any one formula were exclusively infallible, all the others would be fallible. The infallible authority of Popes is responsible for several variant forms, therefore the infallibility must be limited to the doctrine that underlies all official forms and to the same doctrine in all the varied forms."<sup>2</sup>

Briggs has been quoted in full here because of this statement's implications for his understanding of Biblical infallibility.

Protestantism, as understood by Briggs, has always accepted implicitly certainty in the ministerial functions of the Church. This certainty demands infallible authority. It has, says Briggs, in seeking to reject the infallibility of Councils and of the Pope, been uncertain and has failed to define its own position. Insofar as the Roman Church has

---

1. Ibid., p.231.

2. Ibid., pp.231-232.

worked out the problems with its limitations underlined, we, he contends, ought to learn from their insights in formulating our definitions of Authority. Wherever, he says, the infallibility of the Church is to be lodged, it must be limited in a manner comparable to the Vatican's limitations on Papal infallibility.

How then is the infallibility of the Church to be defined? Using the saying of Vincent of Lerons as his guide "Semper, ubique et ab omnibus". Briggs argues for infallibility through consensus. His concern is that the Church both Roman and Reformed has acted prematurely, made decisions which subsequently divided the Church. He perceives the Church possessing the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit will guide the Church to infallible results. Its infallibility, he maintains, is in this consensus. If men of good will do not consent to the truth, they ought not to be compelled by external authority, nor expelled but rather by explanation and qualification they should seek to convince the dissenter.

"The Churches have sinned over and over against the Truth by insisting upon the dogmatic form of the statement rather than upon the Truth itself; and so they have sacrificed the infallible Truth to the human forms in which they have presented it."<sup>1</sup>

Infallibility therefore is in the Truth, infallible to the Church when the whole Church guided by the Spirit is brought to a consensus.

### 3. The Infallibility of the Bible

The infallibility of the Bible as understood by Briggs is the primary concern of this chapter. We shall therefore expound with precision his own understanding of his position.

---

1. Ibid., 236.



The infallibility of the Bible has been affirmed, he maintains, by the Orthodox, Roman Catholics and Protestants alike. The difficulty as with infallibility in the Church, is that the nature and extent of it has not been defined. He considers extreme those who have urged that

"infallibility of the Bible should extend to the whole Bible, and everything in the Bible."<sup>1</sup>

For Briggs, the Church up to and during the Reformation did not hold such a position although their statements are somewhat indefinite. It was the fault of later Protestant scholasticism which went as far as insisting on the infallibility of the Hebrew vowel points. However modern criticism of the Bible has made such a total infallibility impossible. It is now necessary to distinguish between what is and what is not infallible. To avoid arbitrary and capricious discrimination he suggests that principles be determined by which the discriminations can be made.

These principles he takes from the limitations of the infallibility of the Reason and of the Church. He lists them under six categories.<sup>2</sup>

- (1) "The infallibility of the Bible should be limited to doctrines regarding Faith and Morals".<sup>2</sup>

Briggs would exclude from the sphere of infallibility all other matters, e.g. Science, geography, chronology and history which is not a reality

---

1. Ibid., p.237.

2. Ibid., p.237.



"of fact, event and experience which involve doctrines of Faith and Morals, and these only so far as they involve such doctrine."<sup>1</sup>

- (2) "The infallibility of the Bible should be limited to those doctrines that have universal significance."<sup>2</sup>

Through this principle, Briggs believes he is excluding doctrines of faith and practice which are temporary in their character. He gives as examples the Levitical laws of purification and the advice of Paul to the Church at Corinth.

"Not everything that has been approved of God, or even commanded by God through his inspired prophets, can be regarded as infallible."<sup>3</sup>

- (3) "The infallibility of the Bible should be limited to matters that concern human salvation."<sup>4</sup>

Anything in the Bible which is not for that purpose is incidental and circumstantial and therefore not infallible .

- (4) "The infallibility of the Bible should be limited to practical matters."<sup>5</sup>

The theories of the prophets and the Apostles if they do not concern the Christian life are not infallible. In subscribing, as an American Presbyterian, to the Scriptures as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, he sees the Bible being limited to practical concerns.

---

1. Ibid., p.237.

2. Ibid., p.238.

3. Ibid., p.238.

4. Ibid., p.238.

5. Ibid., p.238.

"The infallibility of the Bible should be confined to the Gospel in the Bible, the so-called little Bibles, those passages which contain saving doctrine and vital transforming power upon human life."<sup>1</sup>

- (5) "The infallibility of the Bible should be limited to the substance of doctrine, and not to be extended to the form of words or the structured facts and events in which it is encased."<sup>2</sup>

Modern criticism has made Verbal Inspiration impossible, he claims. The variations in language and formula in which the truth is expressed also makes any other view untenable.

- (6) "The infallibility of the Bible is not in the Bible as a written and printed library of books, but in the divine Spirit speaking through these books to the Christian individual and the Christian Church."<sup>3</sup>

Briggs seeks to answer the objection to this position that every individual makes his own Bible, by admitting that every Christian man has his favourite passages in which the Spirit speaks but such are willing to accept the Bible of the Church as containing multitudes of passages which have influenced others.

The responsibility of the Christian is to follow the Spirit speaking in the Scriptures as he is to follow the Spirit's directions in the Conscience. He may be deceived

---

1. Ibid., pp.238-239.

2. Ibid., p.239.

3. Ibid., p.239.

but that would be a failure in himself to distinguish his own desires and that of the Divine Spirit. What he therefore should constantly seek is verification through the consensus of Christians who are as truly guided as he is. If there is still discord he must again raise the issue before the Conscience and the Bible and follow the dictates of the Divine Spirit at all costs.

Briggs sees the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 doing what he has suggested with the result that under the guidance of the Divine Spirit much of the Old Testament was thrown aside as not applicable re. Christian salvation and the practice of the Christian life. He sees no reason why we ought not to do the same with parts of the New Testament.

"Some day a new Council of Jerusalem under a successor of St. Peter may distinguish between the infallible and fallible in the New Testament likewise."<sup>1</sup>

Before drawing the strands of infallibility together, Briggs considers the status of Apostolic tradition which he believes Protestants have been inclined to depreciate. His position is that insofar as the traditions of the Apostles received the Consensus of the Fathers it ought to be received as part of the Authority of the Church rather than with (as in Roman Catholicism) the authority of the Bible.

The infallibility which Briggs is advocating is not an absolute one.

---

1. Ibid., p.241.



" . . . we can have only a relative infallibility, an infallibility so far as the subject matter, the circumstances and the persons make possible; but no more than this."<sup>1</sup>

It is a relative infallibility which needs to be enlarged and verified and enhanced by other and later infallible words of God to man.

The three fountains of infallible authority are therefore complementary and non-contradictory. He compares them with the three functions of government, the legislative, the executive and the judicial. The Bible would be the legislative, the Church the executive and the Reason the judicial principle for the individual man. Since there is liability to mistake in interpreting decisions two may be used for verifying any one of them.<sup>2</sup>

Briggs believes that the application of this method would cause the difficulties of Christianity to disappear.

"The consent of the three authorities would be overpowering and irresistible in its influence. Christianity, limiting itself to those things thus confirmed as infallible, would be invincible. All mankind would yield unquestioning obedience to it, as the voice of God himself."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.243.

2. Ibid., p.244.

3. Ibid., p.245.

## II. BRIGGS' DOCTRINE OF BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

Briggs' view of Knowledge and Authority in the sphere of religion has already been outlined under his three fountains of Divine Authority. The purpose of this section is to further clarify and expound his understanding of the Authority of God (the Holy Spirit) speaking in the Scriptures.

If the revelation of God in the Bible has any content in Briggs then by his own admittance, it is in the sphere of Biblical Theology. "Here, if anywhere, the Divine Authority will be found".<sup>1</sup> Briggs divides his Biblical Theology into three sections. We shall consider each in turn.

### A - THE RELIGION OF THE BIBLE

Briggs sees two aspects to this. First, Theophanies and second, the Cultic institutions.

Theophanies are for Briggs, "the most prominent feature of the religion of the Bible".<sup>2</sup> Upon them are dependent the miracles, prophecies and every advance. They not only guide the leaders of Old Testament religion, but are the guide of God's people from Egypt to Canaan and are present in Tabernacle and Temple. They are said to climax in the appearing of Christ and subsequently become Christophanies.

Briggs is concerned that they not be identified with the mythological concepts of the ancient religions of the world. He notes four striking differences. First, the myths are polytheistic and the Theophanies of the Bible are monotheistic. Second, unlike 'the legends', the

---

1. Authority of Holy Scripture, op.cit., p.65.

2. Ibid., p.65.



theophanies are not confined to the ancient past but pervade their entire history. Third, the gods of mythology are of like passions as we are, but the Theophanies of the Bible are pure and true. The accommodation of God in Theophany is only in order that

"he may be manifest to the human senses and assure mankind of his presence and favour."<sup>1</sup>

Fourth, the Biblical emphasis on the divine immanence helps to counteract the exaggeration of miracle and prediction, present where Divine Transcendence is underlined. Biblical Theophany therefore begins with God really present in the world, pervading and inhabiting it. In this context, the miracles become signs of his presence, e.g. the pillar of cloud and fire. These prepare for the Christophanies of the New Testament, the Incarnation, Ascension and Advent in Glory in which mankind is taught the lessons of redemption; and the Theophany of the Divine Spirit at Pentecost which is a pledge of his permanent residence in the Church during this era of grace.

If more Theophanies are needed, they will be given, but those recorded in the Bible are enough to give assurance of the divine presence.

The Institutions of Old Testament religion are seen by Briggs, whatever their origin, to be a majestic system. The sacred furniture, rites and holy rules he describes as belonging

"to the region of external religion, and to a lower stage in the religious training of man."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.66.

2. Ibid., p.69.



They were, he says, mere forms without the content of grace, e.g. obedience was always more important than sacrifice, pure hearts ~~than~~ pure hands. The emphasis is unquestionably upon the Holiness of God and the importance of a holy people engaging in holy ceremonies. The vices of other cultic-rites were therefore forbidden in Judaism. The forms of grace point to the redemption of God which finds its realisation in the coming of Messiah.

"They become, for all ages and all men, the appropriate symbols of the universal religion."<sup>1</sup>

#### B - THE FAITH OF THE BIBLE

Under this category Briggs has three sections in which God discloses himself, God, man and redemption.

Briggs' Biblical doctrine of God emphasises that he is One, not the God of a nation but of the earth, Spirit, both Transcendent and Immanent energising all things, Person, bearing proper names and approachable in prayer and praise and Living, the fountain of all life. Briggs would contrast the Biblical doctrine of God with that devised by Philosophical Theism and Systematic Theology. He sees the latter creating an abstract God who is conceived of mechanically.<sup>2</sup> The Biblical God is Living. Such a God could only have been conceived, says Briggs, if

"God had presented himself to him in the forms of the Reason, and he had seen and known him as the only living and true God."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.70.

2. Whither, op.cit., p.93.

3. Authority of Scripture, op.cit., p.72.

Again, contrasting the Biblical doctrine of God with that of the systematic Theologians, Briggs maintains that the favourite attribute of the Old and New Testaments is that of Mercy which is not so evident in nature, and not Justice (although emphasised) which is the favourite of the Theologians. Beginning with the greater Theophany granted to Moses which revealed God as gracious, compassionate, long-suffering and abounding in mercy and faithfulness and concluding with a quotation from John 3:16, to demonstrate the Biblical thrust. He believes that this has been minimised because this love of God transcends human powers of conception and is not logically reconcilable with his Justice.

"O, when will men learn that the Bible means exactly what it says! It may destroy our logic and our syllogisms, our systems and our methods. These we have too long regarded as authorities."<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of Man in the Bible as expounded by Briggs, is seen in the twin mirror of man's sin and misery and his holiness and happiness.

When man reads the Bible he is brought to a consciousness of sin, he is convicted by the Divine voice. The purpose is to bring him to redemption. Briggs although admitting that man was once innocent but fallen, is concerned that the original righteousness is exaggerated to the depreciation of man's ultimate perfection of man. He believes that the teaching that man lost his original righteousness through sin and regains it through grace is in conflict with ethical and religious philosophy.

---

1. Ibid., p.74.

"The original man was innocent and sinless, but not possessed of that righteous and moral excellence that comes only by discipline and heavenly training. The temptation was a necessary means of grace."<sup>1</sup>

Man is seen therefore in state of evolutionary progress:

"Not in the straight line of faith and obedience but in the curved line of sin and redemption."<sup>2</sup>

The other twin of the mirror, man's ideal of perfection is biblical and necessary for moral endeavour. This is the ideal of mankind which was sought in the paths of disobedience but will be gained in redemption. The race of man will therefore be redeemed. The result:

"Divine authority in the Bible calls to every one of us : Forsake sin and live a perfect life; come unto me and be my son, my holy one, the child of my good pleasure."<sup>3</sup>

Redemption as understood by Briggs, is discussed under four headings. The first emphasises its material aspects, as particularly stressed in the Old Testament, i.e. redemption from suffering, from poverty, from oppression. Redemption through Jesus Christ, involves the bodies as well as the souls and "the whole framework of human society."<sup>4</sup> Poverty, vice, crime will be removed from the world.

---

1. Ibid., p.76.

2. Ibid., p.76.

3. Ibid., p.77.

4. Ibid., p.79.



"This heavenly teaching is so against the prejudices and the attainments of mankind that it is an unmistakeable evidence of the Divine authority of Scriptures that so strongly urge it upon us."<sup>1</sup>

The second emphasis is that Redemption is more than justification or regeneration but comprehends the whole process of grace - justification, sanctification and glorification.

"No one who is not entirely saved can sustain the judgment of the day of doom."<sup>2</sup>

Briggs in teaching that unless one reaches perfection in holiness there is no hope for men on the day of judgment. He believes that this biblical doctrine would convey the authority of God to produce holiness.

Briggs third area of Redemption considered, is one which brought him the censure of his General Assembly.

Briggs does not believe that the process of redemption was limited to this world. He seeks to hold together two positions. On the one hand, a doctrine of a middle state of conscious higher life in communication with Christ and the departed of all ages; on the other, that entire sanctification is necessary, in order that the work of redemption may be completed. Without holding to purgatorial purification, Briggs insists that there is no biblical warrant for immediate sanctification at death. Progressive sanctification after death in this middle state is for Briggs, the doctrine of the Bible and the Church.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.79.

2. Ibid., p.80.

3. The substance of this debate is not immediately relevant to this thesis. Briggs presents his argument in detail in 'Whither?', op.cit., p.195ff and in his defence before the Presbytery of New York, p.151ff.

The fourth aspect to Briggs view of biblical Redemption is that it is of our race and of universal nature. It is the limited nature of redemption which he believes in particular, the doctrine of election produced. As the Jews excluded the nations, so, says Briggs, the Church excludes the unbaptised and the heathen. The Love of God does not limit the number of the elect. Although not a universalist, Briggs argues for a cosmic salvation<sup>1</sup>; with the unredeemed, few and insignificant.<sup>2</sup>

### C - BIBLICAL ETHICS

Briggs' primary emphasis in Biblical Theology is Ethical. He sees this as the test of all that has gone before.

Biblical Ethics has progressed, he argues, in stages proportionate to men's ability to perceive the character of God. We are, therefore, free to criticise both the principles and practice of morality in previous eras. He believes Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Judah, David and Solomon to be at a low stage of moral development. By our standards to-day they are worse than they were to their contemporaries. They lived at a stage when:

"The divine exposition of sin was not so searching and the divine law of righteousness was not so evident."<sup>3</sup>

Briggs interprets the development of Israel in these terms. We judge them, he says, as being unfaithful

- 
1. Briggs' and Warfield's views of election are quite different but their views on the scope of salvation are quite strikingly similar. Note. B.B. Warfield's sermon on J.3:16. Warfield, B.B., The Saviour of the World, New York : Hodder and Stoughton, 1914, p.129.
  2. Ibid., p.84.
  3. Ibid., p.85.



and apostate, but in the Old Testament they were dearly beloved and faithful, in the main, "even advancing, never attaining the ideal."<sup>1</sup>

"It is just this feature of Biblical Ethics that assures us that Divine Authority is in it. It presents an ideal ever far above historical reality".<sup>2</sup>

Briggs puts the Ten Commandments within this category as being uttered by a Divine voice from Sinai. Other ethical principles of the Pentateuch he thinks to be local and temporary, but within them there are elements, hints for the solution of to-day's social problems. Again there are ethical principles in the Psalter, the Prophets and particularly the wisdom literature which is essentially ethical and yet has been greatly neglected by Theologians. The ethical portions of the New Testament, according to Briggs, have also been neglected, e.g. the second half of Romans, the Epistle of James, but in particular the Ethics of Jesus, both in his life and his statements. The latter are the ideals of perfection which will be realised:

"When the world has been so trained and disciplined in the progress of sanctification that it shall become like him."<sup>3</sup>

#### D - THE MESSIAH

Briggs wishes to unite the elements of religion, doctrine and morals in Jesus Christ. There has been a tendency to have an unbalanced view of Jesus, according to

---

1. Ibid., p.86.

2. Ibid., p.86.

3. Ibid., p.90.



Briggs. Each generation is said to have taken a small portion of what the Scriptures reveal about him and has left other aspects of the doctrine unexplored, e.g. His divinity over and against his humanity or vice versa; his humiliation in neglect of his exaltation and glory; his death as an atonement over and against his incarnation. Elements of Jesus' ministry once neglected are now surfacing, e.g. his descent into Hell and its implications for the Middle State: A more balanced picture of Christ will exert a far greater influence than the speculative elaboration of a few phrases, argues Briggs.

This new light which is breaking forth from the Word of God, giving new life, new doctrine and new morality to the Church of God is because the Old Method of dogmatic system from selected texts is passing away and is being replaced by the inductive study of the Bible which forces Briggs to study every word, sentence, and clause in order that the whole organisms of the Bible is presented as one.

Briggs' personal testimony to this method is that

" . . . those things that once seemed to be probabilities on the basis of speculative theology and confessional theology, have, in the light of God's Word and in the conviction of Divine authority, come to be certainties - the verities of God."<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.93.

## THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF GOD

### I - PRACTICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REASONS

#### (1) The Scriptures as a Means of Grace

Briggs would here seek to demonstrate that the Bible is the Word of God because of how it functions as a means of grace.

Redemption by grace alone is recognised by him as an essential principle of the Reformation. Allied with this is the Lutheran emphasis on Justification by faith alone. Briggs sees intermediate to these two principles a third principle or formal principle, that is, the divine word alone. The Churches of the Reformation are said to differ in emphasis with regard to these principles with the British and particular the puritan churches majoring on the formal principle.

The word of God is said to be where faith and grace meet. It gives faith its appropriate object. It is the means of grace.

Briggs' basic thesis in this regard is that the word of God as a means of grace, has its technical meaning.

"It is not the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in their entirety, but rather the Gospel contained in the Scriptures."<sup>1</sup>

The grace of this Gospel is appropriated by faith alone. Faith becomes a test of the word of God. Having

---

1. Briggs, C.A., Biblical Study, Its Principles, Methods and History, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1884, p.407.

appropriated the grace of the Gospel it is able to determine what is and what is not the Word of God. This, he says, is the merit of the Lutheran Reformation. The corresponding merit of the Calvinist Reformation is that in setting out ~~that~~ redemption is by grace alone, this sole efficacious instrument becomes itself a test of the Word of God, i.e. the grace of God in the Scriptures bears witness ~~to~~ the Scriptures, discriminating the true canon from all other books. What Briggs means here is that the canon has been accepted by the Church because these books have been a means of grace.

The difficulty recognised by him is how to combine these three principles. The error, as a result of failing to merge these principles, was

"the undue emphasis of the external Word of God over against the internal Word of God."<sup>1</sup>

It is crucial, he believes, that we know how to distinguish between the means of grace and the grace itself and that we are able to relate the divine word to the work of the Holy Spirit. He argues that in the nineteenth century there is a possibility of solution by the exaltation of Jesus Christ as the central principle of theology. "He is the Word of God in the Word of God, the eternal Logos."<sup>2</sup>

The grace of God is said to be given to men in Jesus Christ and it is the Holy Spirit who presents to us Christ and applies his grace to our lives. The Holy Spirit makes this application by 'means'; the chief being 'the word of God' which for Briggs is synonymous with the Holy

---

1. Ibid., p.409.

2. Ibid., p.410.



Gospel and is contained in the Scriptures in the Old and New Testaments.

The first question this raises for him is; "In what sense are the Scriptures means of grace?" The answer he gives is:

"The Scriptures are means of grace in that they contain the Gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation."<sup>1</sup>

Briggs proceeds to highlight the attributes of the word of God and quotes from Scripture to justify them, e.g. The Sword of the Spirit, the Lamp of God, the seed of regeneration, the power of God. These attributes, he argues are not because of inspiration which is to assure us that what is in the Scripture comes from God. They are deeper than that. They are characteristics found in the Church and the sacraments which are not inspired and infallible. They ascribe to the word a divine power.

The second question is then; "What is this power contained in the Scriptures?" The answer given is:

"The power of grace contained in the Scriptures is the redemption made known to us, freely offered to us and effectually applied to us in Jesus Christ, the Saviour."<sup>2</sup>

The Gospel therefore presents in a rich variety of modes the Word of God incarnate. The Scriptures give not merely a history of Israel but the history of Redemption. There is not in Scripture mere biography but the experience of men in grace. The precepts of those who fear God are

---

1. Ibid., p.411.

2. Ibid., p.412.

found as are the songs of the redeemed. There is prophecy and preaching. There are essays and epistles not to enlighten us in the arts and the sciences;

"but they set forth Jesus Christ  
the Saviour in whom are hid all  
the treasures of wisdom and  
knowledge (Col. 2:13).<sup>1</sup>

This is said to be the holy substance of the Bible to which all else is the form.

This grace in Jesus Christ and conveyed by the Scriptures, Briggs divides into two areas.

First, the Grace of Regeneration. The word of God regenerates. It is described by Jesus to be a seed which when planted germinates so that the word has the force to bring life to the human spirit. So that the Gospel is not a dead letter. Jesus is present in it. There are, he claims, "brief, tense, mysterious, yet simple texts,"<sup>2</sup> found throughout the Bible. He calls them little Bibles, "that contain the quintessence of the whole."<sup>3</sup> They convict of sin. They persuade of forgiveness. They constrain faith. They give assurance.

"There are no other words like the words of God contained in the Sacred Scriptures, in which the grace of God appropriates, moulds, and energises the forms of human speech with creative, generative power."<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.413.

2. Ibid., p.414.

3. Ibid., p.414.

4. Ibid., p.414.

Second, the Grace of Sanctification. Briggs points to the prayer of Jesus that his disciples might be sanctified by the word which is truth. The appeal of the 'True Word' is not therefore to the intellect, nor to the aesthetic nature but to the religious and ethical sphere, for says Briggs "it is essentially ethical."<sup>1</sup> It lays a hold of the religious and ethical instincts of man and brings him to God.

This is not accomplished by the Law, but by the Gospel of grace which shows us who God is and what Christ has done to perfect us.

Human speech therefore is employed by God as an instrument of his power.

"It enwraps and conveys to sinful man the divine grace of regeneration and sanctification, it presents the divine Trinity to man in all their redemptive offices, and it is the channel of communication, of attachment, of communion, of organic vision, and everlasting blessedness."<sup>2</sup>

The third question therefore before Briggs, is, if the Scriptures have in them the grace of God how are we regenerated and sanctified by the word of Christ? In what lies its efficacy?

The answer he gives, quoting from the Westminster Larger Catechism Q.155, is that it is the Spirit of God that makes the Scriptures effectual. Their efficacy is in the sphere of religion. The grace of God experienced thus,

---

1. Ibid., p.415.

2. Ibid., pp.415-416.



by Scripture must have been made efficacious by a divine force. There must be an immediate contact and work upon the hearers of the Word. The Word does not work ex opere operato. The Bible, and the reading, studying and memorising of same are the external forms of the Word, they contain the spiritual substance. The form must be made to reveal its substance as a shell is broken to expose the nut.<sup>1</sup>

The word of God is effectual therefore only when the Holy Spirit is at work in the depths of the heart, apply<sup>ing</sup> the truth to the needs of the believer.

The fourth and corresponding question is "how are we to obtain the grace of God contained in the Scripture and applied effectually by the Holy Spirit?"

Briggs' answer is an exposition of the Westminster Shorter Catechism answer to Question 90.

"That the Word may become effectual to salvation; we must attend there unto with diligence, preparation and prayer; receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts and practice it in our lives."<sup>2</sup>

The first thing in the study of the Word is therefore attention. This is true of all study but re. the Word it is peculiar and vastly higher. It is in this case characterised by prayer. For this study is characterised by a search for the power of God. All attention is focused upon God in order that grace might be received in personal union with Him.

---

1. Ibid., p.417.

2. Quoted by Briggs- Ibid., p.418.

"It is of prime importance, therefore, that the student of the Bible should be bathed in prayer, and that the spirit of prayer should be the animating influence in all our investigations of the Scriptures."<sup>1</sup>

To underline this point he demonstrates its importance in respect to the other areas of Biblical study. The science of textual criticism and familiarity with the original languages he considers vital but such does not insure knowledge of the grace of God.

"It is as if a man should enter the King's garden and devote his entire attention to the study of the gates and walls."<sup>2</sup>

Literary or Higher Criticism is again encouraged but this does not result per se in study as a means of grace. It would be like entering the King's garden and instead of going to his presence as invited, we should devote ourselves to the beautiful trees and flowers.

Biblical exegesis can be engaged in by non-Christians, says Briggs. We can quest after truth and accuracy without finding God; That is, on entering the King's garden we may scientifically examine and classify the contents, but never meet the king.

The Highest attainment of biblical scholarship, is, for Briggs, the Theology of the Bible - its religion, doctrines and morals, but even this, he admits, is not the study of the Bible as a means of grace.

---

1. Ibid., p.419.

2. Ibid., p.420.

"It is as if we entered the King's palace and devoted our attention to the principles and maxims of his administration, the ruler of his household, while the King himself was graciously waiting to receive us unto his own presence and give us the kiss of fatherly salvation."<sup>1</sup>

Without wishing to underestimate the value of such study, Briggs contends that the starting point is prayer whereby we seek the person and presence of God, giving slight attention to the disciplines mentioned until we are in his presence chamber. He will then be assured of the Bible as the Word of God and its Canon. He will see Jesus to be in the centre of the Scriptures and from there he will gather the manifestations of truth throughout the Scriptures.

The second element in faith with respect to the Word as a means of grace is appropriation. In this our attention becomes more and more absorbed in its object. Our quest through prayer being satisfied we through this personal contact find our affections and faith invigorated. Our spiritual appetites are enriched.

However because the grace of God pervades the Scriptures it does not mean that it is equally easy for faith to see and appreciate the grace of God in every passage. This will depend on our maturity. This is true not only of the individual but of the whole Church. New light will yet break forth from the Word of God. Progression in the knowledge of grace must continue.

The Scriptures are therefore means, not ends. The end being personal attachment to Jesus Christ.

---

1. Ibid., p.422.



The third dimension of faith which makes the Word effectual is practicing faith. It is in the doing of the Word that we know its truth. Our faith is tested by practice.

The Christian and the Church must therefore put into practice the Scriptures received as a means of grace. The more we do, the more we apprehend.

Christians must also become secondary sources of supply. The Word of God when appropriated by the Christian does not cease to be the Gospel. The changing of the form does not erase the substance. Christians can and should become living epistles of God.

## (2) INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Briggs would seek to ally the authority of the Scriptures with its inspiration but not with what he would describe as the scholastic and dogmatic theory of inspiration espoused by his protagonists when on trial and epitomised by Princetonian Theology.

He presents three ways of formulating a doctrine of inspiration.<sup>1</sup>

### (i) Inspiration as a part of Biblical Theology

This is achieved by a careful study of the Scriptures in which their own testimony to their origin, character, design, value and authority is presented.

---

1. Biblical Studies, op.cit., p.96ff.

(ii) The Symbolical or Church Doctrine of Inspiration

The witness of the symbols of the Church,

"which express the faith of the Church as attained in the great crises of its history, in the study of the Scriptures, in the experiences and life of men."<sup>1</sup>

(iii) The Dogmatic Doctrines of Inspiration

This is constructed by the study of Scripture and symbols with the logical implications of this applied to a particular era in accordance with a dominant philosophy or theology.

Briggs would seek to set out his position within the context of a Biblical Theology, would defend his position with an exposition of the symbols and would be critical of those dogmatic views of inspiration which claim verbal inspiration and the inspiration of the original autographs as that which alone is infallible.

In presenting Briggs' doctrine of inspiration we shall set out his own view which he calls plenary inspiration and then his arguments against verbal inspiration and authority being aligned to the inspired autographs.

Briggs gives us no exegetical justification for his use of the word 'inspiration' but he does tell us how he uses the term (plenary) or (full) inspiration. He uses it, he says:

---

1. Ibid., pp.96-97.

". . . in the grammatical and historical sense as referring to the contents of the words. When we say that a lamp is full of oil, we do not mean that the lamp is oil, but that it contains oil in the receptacle which it encloses. When I say the scriptures are full of divine inspiration, I mean that the scriptures as writings are filled full with an inspired rule of faith and practice, which rule fills and pervades Scripture in all its parts."<sup>1</sup>

Briggs would wish to distinguish this work of inspiration from the providential care and superintendence of God over the external production. Such providence he sees at work in the Church and sacraments without their forms being inspired. Inspiration he concludes must lie back of the external letter.

". . . it is that which gives the word its efficacy, it is the divine afflatus which enlightened and guided holy men to apprehend the truth of God in its appropriate forms; assured them of their possession of it; and called and enabled them to make it known to the Church by voice and pen."<sup>2</sup>

Here inspiration is seen to be primarily a work of God in the lives of the writers of Scripture making their production 'holy'.

It is the climax of God at work in the history of his people.

"The Word of God came to man at first orally, in connection with Theophanies. These theophanies are

---

1. Briggs, Defence, op.cit., pp.91-92.

2. Biblical Study, op.cit., p.161.



divine manifestations in forms of time and space. From them, as centres, went forth the supernatural influences in word of revelation and deed of miracle. These theophanies attained their culmination in Jesus Christ . . . and the divine Word reached its completion in His Gospel. The Word of God, issuing from these theophanic centres, was appropriated more and more by Holy men, upon whom the Divine Spirit came, taking possession of them, influencing and directing them in the exercise of prophetic ministry. An important part of this ministry was the oral delivery of the divine word to the people of God in ascending stages of revelation. This word was gradually committed to writing, and assumed the literary forms that are presented to us in the canon of Scripture."<sup>1</sup>

In terms of the relationship between 'inspiration' and the 'literary forms' we have now, Briggs is more sure as to what is not affirmed than what is affirmed.

Briggs recognises that inspiration is related to infallibility and authority.

"Inspiration has to do with the truthfulness, reliability, accuracy, and authority of the Word of God ; the assurance that what we have that the instruction contained therein comes from God."<sup>2</sup>

This infallibility does not extend to all that is in Scripture. This would require more than inspiration,

---

1. Ibid., p.296.

2. Biblical Study, op.cit., p.411.

either a composition in heaven given to perfect men and kept perfect by a succession of perfect priests<sup>1</sup> or a form of mechanical dictation.<sup>2</sup> Instead

"He (God) used the human reason and all the faculties of imperfect human nature. He used the voice and hands of imperfect men. He allowed the sacred writings to be edited and re-edited, arranged and rearranged and rearranged again by imperfect scribes. It is improbable that such imperfect instrumentalities should attain perfect results. It was improbable that fallible men should produce a series of writings infallible in every respect. It was sufficient that divine inspiration and the guidance of the Holy Spirit should make their writings an infallible rule of faith and practice, and that the divine energy should push the human and the fallible into the external forms, into the unessential and unnecessary matters, into the human setting of the divine ideals."<sup>3</sup>

The doctrine of Verbal Inspiration; the view that God was involved in the choice of words and verbal expression to communicate his meaning, in inspiration and espoused by Warfield, is rejected by Briggs for the following reasons.

(1) It is nothing more than an opinion of dogmaticians and has never been taught by the symbols of the Reformed Churches.

". . . no confession of faith or catechism of recognised standing in the Reformed or Lutheran Church,

---

1. Defence, op.cit., p.89.

2. Bible, Church and Reason, op.cit., p.107.

3. Defence, op.cit., pp.89-90.

teaches that the Scriptures are inspired in their verbal expression."<sup>1</sup>

- (2) The doctrine of Verbal Inspiration is based on the belief that:

"the line can never rationally be drawn between the thoughts and words of Scripture."<sup>2</sup>

If this is true then, says Briggs, the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek documents as they were written, are the only inspired Word of God. And if we cannot separate the inspired thoughts from the inspired words - then we cannot transfer the inspired thoughts into other words. The result is that no version can contain the Inspired Word of God. This is contrary to the Reformed faith which in advocating the Scriptures in the vernacular is arguing that inspired thoughts may be conveyed through translations and translations which are beyond verbal correspondence. Verbal Inspiration would therefore cut people off from the real word of God and make the priests of the Bible the critics who alone have knowledge of the original languages.<sup>3</sup>

- (3) Textual Criticism makes verbal inspiration untenable. In the Old Testament its corollary was the view, held by some, that inspiration involved the vowel points and accents of the text. Textual criticism has made this view impossible. If Warfield and Hodge accept this, as they do, then they must recognise that inspiration does not involve the written letters or uttered sounds of

---

1. Whither, op.cit., p.46.

2. Hodge and Warfield, 'Inspiration', op.cit., p.8.

3. Whither, Ibid., pp.64-66.



of our present Hebrew text, for these are transliterations of the originals which have been lost, and the sounds are uncertain. We cannot therefore have the original.

"The inspiration must therefore lie back of the written letters and the uttered sounds and be sought in that which is common to the old characters and the new, the utterance of the voice and the constructions of the pen, namely, in the concepts, the sense and meaning that they convey."<sup>1</sup>

Inspiration is of the concepts not of the words.

". . . the same divine truth may be presented in a variety of synonymous words and phrases and sentences."<sup>2</sup>

For Briggs the authority of the inspired word of God is found in every translation of the Bible which communicates the Gospel.

In Briggs' view, faced with the various phenomenological errors in the text of Holy Scripture, and yet wishing to claim that the Scriptures were infallible in all things affirmed, it was necessary for the Princeton School to claim inspiration and therefore infallibility only for the original autographs of Scripture.

The differing views on this subject and to which Briggs addressed his comments were the following words from the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 1:8.

---

1. Biblical Study, op.cit., pp.156-157.

2. Ibid., p.158.

"The Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek, being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic."

For Briggs, the clause 'immediately inspired' which was used by the Princetonians to emphasise the inspiration of the original autographs, has nothing to do with the original autographs. 'Being immediately inspired' does not, argues Briggs, refer to the origin of Scripture in the past but to their present condition.

"The doctrine is that the Hebrew and Greek copies, as we now have them in our hands, are immediately inspired by God; they have within them the divine grace of inspiration, and it is there immediately from God as compared with the translations from the Greek and Hebrew originals, where the inspiration is immediately from God, namely, through the medium of these originals."<sup>1</sup>

The second important phrase in this section of the Confession 'Kept pure in all ages' is used by Briggs to demonstrate that the advocates of inerrancy are inconsistent with the confession. In arguing that the errors or impurities in the text are the fault of the Synagogue and the Church and that purity is reserved only for the original autographs, they are, by their own standards, under condemnation. For Briggs what has been kept pure is that which is necessary to determine religious controversies ; the only infallible rule of faith and practice.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Briggs, Defence, op.cit., p.98.

2. Ibid., pp.99-101.

(3) THE TESTIMONIUM SPIRITUS SANCTI

Fundamental to Briggs' understanding of the Bible as the word of God and the nature of its authority, is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer convincing him that as he hears the Scriptures this is the Word of God.

It is in the course of his exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 1:4-5, that his position is stated.

The Authority of the Church, contrary to the Roman position, cannot give us any more than 'a high and reverent esteem for the Holy Scripture'. The Church has no right to authenticate what is or is not the Word of God. It may encourage us to examine the internal evidences e.g. 'the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts' etc. But even these evidences cannot bring assurance and certainty. Because,

"our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the work in our hearts."

The authority of Holy Scripture is therefore said to be dependent wholly upon God.

"On this principle the canon is determined. The books of the canon are named, and then it is said, 'All which are given, by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life'. The apocryphal books are no part of the canon of Scripture, because they are not of divine inspiration. It



is, therefore, the authority of God himself, speaking through the Holy Spirit, by and with the word to the heart, that determines that the writings are infallible as the inspired word of God; and it is their inspiration that determines their canonicity."<sup>1</sup>

Briggs believes that this reformational and Puritan view was being undermined by the Princeton Theologians who were seeking to base the extent of the canonical scriptures upon the evidence of history. For the Princeton men, two correlated facts had to be established in order for a book to be treated as canonical. There had to be evidence of its acceptance by the early Church and a recognition that the writings were either apostolic or had been given apostolic authority.

Briggs would seek to present three arguments against this latter view apart from the fact that it was contrary to the Westminster Confession of Faith.

(1) It leaves the authority of Scripture at the mercy of historical criticism. The question of the apocryphal books which were acknowledged by the Roman Catholic Church and rejected by the Reformed Churches is reopened. What of the books of the Old and New Testaments around which there was controversy as to whether they would be received as canonical or not, These questions are reopened.

"We can only at the best obtain the result that there is unanimous agreement in the early Church as to certain books; that there were some objections to several others; that

---

1. Whither, op.cit., p.75.

still other books had many opponents, and that some writings were doubtful. The sum total of this evidence is at its best, probability as to most books and doubts as to others, but certainty in no case."<sup>1</sup>

- (2) Faith is on such a method being built upon human evidence and historical testimony which of necessity cannot give us infallibility and certainty.

"How can we get an infallible Holy Scripture from a fallible tradition reaching back to uncertain human testimony in the early Christian Church?"<sup>2</sup>

- (3) By defending the canonicity of New Testament books on apostolic origin or superintendence, Briggs believed the Princetonians were placing Biblical Authority upon the shifting sands of Literary or Higher Criticism, whose purpose was to determine questions of authenticity i.e. whether a writing is anonymous, pseudonymous or bears the name of the author. Authorship was for Briggs, until the emergence of Literary Criticism, a matter of Tradition. He does not hesitate therefore in applying the appropriate tools of science to ascertain whether or not, the traditional theories as to authorship were correct or not. Alexander, Hodge and Warfield, have, for Briggs, placed the Inspiration, Canonicity and Authority of the Bible into the hands of the literary critics.

1. Whither? Ibid., p.80.

2. Bible, Church and Reason, op.cit., p.6.

He cites four examples from the New Testament:

- (i) The Gospel of Mark was probably influenced by Peter and Luke by Paul, but there is no evidence that they superintended these Gospels. Is there a question mark against their authority because of uncertainty as to Apostolic superintendence?
- (ii) The consensus of criticism is that Paul did not write Hebrews. Does this destroy its canonicity?
- (iii) It is not certain that Matthew wrote the Gospel bearing his name but <sup>it</sup> was possibly the Aramaic logia at the basis of the Gospel which was used with the Gospel of Mark to make up the Gospel of Matthew as we have it to-day. Is the canonicity and authority of Matthew now under question?
- (iv) The debate is raging over whether the Apostle John was the author of the fourth Gospel. If a Christian scholar doubts if John wrote it - Is this book no longer to be considered by him as canonical?<sup>1</sup>

The procedure therefore of identifying the Bible as the Word of God with historical evidences for canonicity and the authenticity of authorship, Briggs describes as 'folly'. This is contrary to the Reformers and the Westminster Divines.

"No wiles of Jesuits could mislead them, they built on the fides divina - the divine evidence of the testimony of the Spirit - and those who do not build with them abandon the rock of the Reformation."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Whither, Ibid., pp.84-85.

2. Whither, Ibid., p.81.



## II. APOLOGETIC REASONS

Apologetically, Briggs would seek to defend his view of the Bible as the Word of God from three angles. First, that infallibility, as he understands it, is necessary for certainty in the sphere of religion ; Second, that his position, which rejects inerrancy, can alone cope with the critical theories ; and third, that his view is the historic doctrine of the Church and that the Princeton School including Warfield is an extra-confessional deviation.

- (1) Infallibility necessary for Certainty.<sup>1</sup>
- (2) Inerrancy rejected

Biblical criticism brought Briggs to the position that errors in Scripture were evident and had to be admitted.

" . . . it is the unanimous testimony of modern Biblical scholarship that there are errors in the Hebrew and Greek texts now in our hands, errors that meet us in textual criticism, in literary criticisms, and in historical criticisms that no one has been able to deny or to explain away."<sup>2</sup>

Further: "No-one can be a true Biblical scholar and maintain the unerrancy of Holy Scripture."<sup>3</sup>

By errors, Briggs means chronological, geographical and other circumstantial inconsistencies. An Illustration of this he cites Matthew 26:9. Here a passage from Zechariah is quoted but it is attributed by the writer to Jeremiah.<sup>4</sup>

- 1. See exposition on Infallibility, p.
- 2. Defence, op.cit., p.100.
- 3. Appendix V, B.C.R., p.218.
- 4. Whither?, op.cit., p.72.

Briggs admits that he does not like to point out such errors, even if they be of minor inadvertence, in Sacred Scripture.<sup>1</sup> But to refuse to admit them is to "shut your eyes to truth and fact"<sup>2</sup> and to make faith impossible for the historical critic.

How then may Briggs justify this view with the recognition of the infallibility of Scripture?

At Briggs' ordination he subscribed to the statement:

"I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice."<sup>3</sup>

For him, he was not subscribing to what he considers to be a modern dogma, concerning the inerrancy of the original autographs of Scripture, but to what for him is the natural, grammatical and historical meaning of the terms, namely; that the Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and practice ; not of everything in science, philosophy, history, art, grammar or literature. Errors therefore of chronology and geography e.g. would not be in contravention of 'the Scriptures being the only infallible rule of faith and practice'.

The errors therefore recognised by Briggs are according to him:

"In the circumstantials and not in the essentials. These errors do not directly or indirectly disturb

- 
1. Authority of Holy Scripture, op.cit., p.55.
  2. Ibid., p.55.
  3. Quoted by Briggs in Bible, Church and Reason, op.cit., p.91.

those infallible matters of faith and practice, or of the historic events and institutions with which they are inseparably united."<sup>1</sup>

"If we should limit divine inspiration and authority to the essential contents of the Bible, to its religion, faith and morals, we would still have ample room to seek divine authority where alone it is essential, or even important, in the teaching that guides our devotions, our thinking, and our conduct."<sup>2</sup>

Briggs appreciated that the recognition of errors in the Bible might undermine the credibility of the Scriptures, using the maxim. 'Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus. To this Briggs makes a two-fold response. First, that no mere man can escape error even under inspiration unless the divine revelation set familiar things in an infallible light and so controlled him ; his eye, his hand, his imagination, his reasoning, his forms of expression and so raised him above the knowledge of his contemporaries that he could anticipate discoveries by thousands of years.<sup>3</sup>

Second, the question of credibility must be distinguished from infallibility. A witness in a court room is not rejected because of a slip in error of detail. In fact a witness who makes no mistakes may be open to suspicion as one prepared by his advocate. The credibility of Scripture could only be questioned if the errors discovered were not errors of ignorance or inadvertence but errors of deceit and falsehood.<sup>4</sup> Since no historical document is

---

1. Biblical Study, op.cit., p.242.

2. Authority of Holy Scripture, op.cit., pp.35-36.

3. Biblical Study, op.cit., p.240.

4. Bible, Church and Reason, op.cit., p.93.



infallible, the Bible as an historical document ought not to be discarded if errors of history are found.

The Bible is therefore infallible with regard to its intent, i.e. in all matters of divine revelation. The writer did not have an infallible knowledge of countries they had never visited. They did not give exact and infallible report of words spoken centuries before. The writer of the creation narrative did not know geology and astronomy and natural history better than modern science. The purpose of revelation was not to teach us such but:

"to teach us the Science of God and Redemption, and the act of living, holy, godlike lives."<sup>1</sup>

Apart from his evidence, from the testimony of the Church which will be presented presently, Briggs would seek to use three arguments to reinforce his contention.

First, that the Scriptures do not claim inerrancy. No such claim, he says, can be found in any sentence or word of the Bible. Their claim to be the Word of God, inspired, and sufficient to enlighten and save men, infallible in religion, faith and morals.

". . . but they do not claim that minute accuracy which distinguishes exact scholarship and the highest professional skill, much less do they claim that minute accuracy which distinguishes exact scholarship and the highest professional skill, much less do they claim the infinite perfection of God."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Bible, Church and Reason, op.cit., p.94.

2. Ibid., p.107.

In fact, for Briggs, the very process of inspiration made such inerrancy impossible. The revelation through human minds cause their writings to reflect their human settings and therefore render it improbable that they be free from error. The result of this mode of inspiration is of necessity, crude psychology, inexact methods of reasoning, extravagant rhetoric, rude language, provincial conceptions and defective knowledge of the earth. The Bible therefore does not possess inerrancy in its human setting and does not claim such.

"It is sufficient if the divine ideals that come from revelation are errorless, so that the Bible can be followed with implicit confidence in all matters of faith and practice."<sup>1</sup>

Second, that inerrancy is a dangerous doctrine. Briggs finds the Princeton position damaging to the faith of the believer who has only in his possession a version of the Bible which contains errors by the admission of all. These errors cannot be avoided. What comfort is it to say that only the original autographs are errorless. These autographs are not available. Errorless autographs, is for Briggs, pure speculation which cannot be verified by criticism. The Princeton position is therefore a valueless dogma for the man with the English Bible. The belief that what has never been seen for centuries is errorless, on the basis that God could and would only give us an inerrant Bible, is bound to create doubts among the faithful. For in the process of their argument:

". . . they reproach the real Bible in which errors are found, in order to exalt an imaginary Bible which neither they nor any one else has ever discovered."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.108.

2. Ibid., p.114.



Third, that believing critical scholarship not only approaches the errors positively but strengthens the credibility of Scripture.

Critical scholarship admits that there are errors in the original texts and autographs but that they are only in minor matters, in things which lie beyond faith and practice.

As the critic has discovered the variety of form and colour in the revelation many of the apparent inconsistencies have been removed, as when different modes of representing the same thing are seen to complement rather than contradict one another. Such combining of colour and form in a wider vision of what is presented is not the same as that

". . . unity of mere coincidence such as the older harmonists sought to obtain by stretching and straining the Scriptures on the procrustean bed of their hair-splitting scholasticism."<sup>1</sup>

These apparent inconsistencies can also be explained in terms of revelation being progressive and in the accommodation of God to men, the earlier shadows and types are seen to be crude and imperfect representations of better things to follow. Or again the language of the Bible is popular and unscientific but appropriate to the understanding of the people in the concrete situation. It is only a problem when we engage in scholastic abstraction. Critical scholarship has also demonstrated the apparent different methods of logic and rhetoric in the Oriental writers than we use in our Western culture.<sup>2</sup> However, not all inconsistencies can be explained in this way.

---

1. Biblical Study, op.cit., p.244.

2. Ibid., pp.244-245.



"There are errors in the Bible  
as there are spots upon the sun."<sup>1</sup>

But as the sun-spots do not disturb the sun's effectiveness,

"So the errors in Holy Scripture do  
not in the slightest degree impair  
the divine authority that shines  
through it or the reign of grace that  
is carried on in this world by means  
of it."<sup>2</sup>

(3) This is the orthodox doctrine of the Church. Briggs believed that he had in no way departed from the orthodox teaching of the Christian Church. Having been trained by two systematic theologians - Henry B. Smith and Isaac A. Dorner who, according to Briggs, had built their teaching on the Bible, the Creeds, the history of Doctrine and the highest attainments of human reason, Briggs was convinced that his position was consistent with the Symbols of Faith.

It was just this point that was being challenged by the Princeton School represented by Hodge and Warfield who wrote:

"Nevertheless, the historical faith of the Church has always been, that all the affirmations of Scripture of all kinds, whether of spiritual doctrine or duty, or of physical or historical fact, or of psychological or philosophical principle are without any error, when the ipsissima verba of the original autographs are ascertained and interpreted in their natural and intended sense."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Bible, Church and Reason, op.cit., p.117.

2. Ibid., p.117.

3. Hodge and Warfield, Presbyterian Review, Vol.2, p.238, quoted in Whither? op.cit., p.69.

To repudiate this contention Briggs found it necessary to illustrate a contrary stance from the history of the Church and especially the reformers. He then expounded the Westminster Confession of Faith, as the symbol of Presbyterianism, in its historical context, to demonstrate that those formulating the Confession were in agreement with himself.

We shall set out Briggs' repudiation under five headings:

(a) The Historic View of the Church

Briggs would seek to justify this contention by direct quotations from the Fathers, Reformers and leading Anglo-Saxon divines who recognise errors in the Bible without such undermining the Authority of the Scriptures. Apart from quoting in full from Briggs extract it is difficult to demonstrate his thesis. We shall however, merely give references in the Fathers and quote the Reformers and Anglo-Saxon divines when they are found in the context of Briggs engaging in exposition.

Origen : (Com. in Joan. Tomus x.2, Migue, Patralogia, Greek, Tom.XIV, Origen, Tom. IV.311)

Jerome : (Matt. 26:9), Migue, Patr. XXVI.

Augustine : (Harmony of the Gospels, III, 7:30, in Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Augustine's Works, VI, pp.191-192.)<sup>1</sup>

The quotations from Jerome and Augustine are with reference to Matthew 26:9 where Zechariah is quoted and the name of Jeremiah used. Calvin, he says, also recognised this as error.

---

1. Bible, Church and Reason, Appendix V. pp.215-217.

"How the name of Jeremiah crept in, I confess I know not nor am I seriously troubled about it. That the name of Jeremiah has been put for Zechariah by an error, the fact itself shows, because there is no such statement in Jeremiah."<sup>1</sup>

Calvin is again quoted in recognising an erroneous statement by Stephen in Acts 7:16.

"It is evident that he (Stephen) made a mistake in the name of Abraham, since Abraham bought a double cave of Ephoin the Hittite, for the internment of his wife: but Joseph was buried elsewhere, viz., in the field which his father Jacob bought of the Sons of Hamor for a hundred lambs. Wherefore this passage is to be corrected."<sup>2</sup>

The works of Luther are also cited.

Luther's Werke, Erlangen edition, Vierzehiter Band, pp.319, 324

Luther's Werke, Erlangen edition, Funfzigster Band, p.325

Luther's Werke, Erlangen edition, Sechs und Vierzigster Band, pp.173-174.

Luther's Briefe, Funfter Theil, p.489.

Richard Baxter of the seventeenth century is quoted as a Presbyterian who did not believe in inerrancy.

"The Scripture is like a man's body, where some parts are but for the preservation of the rest, and may be maimed without death : The sense is

---

1. Quoted by Briggs in Defence, op.cit., p.106.

2. Quoted in Defence, Ibid., p.109.



the soul of the Scripture ; and the letters but the body or vehicle . . . The Old Testament letter (written as we have it about Ezra's time) is that vehicle which is as imperfect as the Revelation of these times was : But as after Christ's incarnation and ascension, the Spirit was more abundantly given, and the Revelation more perfect and select, so the doctrine is more full and the vehicle or body, that is, the words are less imperfect and more sure to us;"<sup>1</sup>

Briggs would then give extracts from his mentors and contemporaries who were seeking to combine, like him, Criticism with Christianity, e.g. Van Oosterzee, Marcus Dods, William Sanday, Alexander B. Bruce, Joseph A. Beet, A.H. Charteris, Alfred Plummer, Charles Core, Alfred Cave, James Iverach, Joseph Henry Thayer, W.R. Huntington, Thomas G. Apple, George P. Fisher, Marvin R. Vincent, J.H. Fairchild.

The absence of any reference to inerrancy in the Symbols of the Church combined with historic references of recognition of error leads Briggs to conclude that this has been the consistent confessions of Christendom.

But how did the alternative view emerge? The answer is:

(b) The History of Scholasticism

During the reformation the prevalent view was that the external word was a mere instrument, in which they sought the sense of the infallible Divine Word contained in the Scriptures which was applied to the heart by the Holy

---

1. Baxter, R., 'The Catechising of Families', 1683, p.36, quoted in Whither? op.cit., p.71.

Spirit. This was the Protestant principle over and against Romanism. However when the polemic against Rome subsided, internal squabbles within Protestantism meant

"the reformed faith was built up by a series of scholastics over against Lutheranism, and Calvinistic orthodoxy over against Arminianism."<sup>1</sup>

The Protestant reformed system developed by apriori deduction and the distinctive Protestant principles became hidden.

Biblical scholarship did not have Roman tradition to influence it, instead it turned to the Jewish-Rabbinical tradition, and this was developed in the School of Buxtorf at Basle.

The Protestant critical principle did not die and was reasserted through Ludwig Capellus, of the French School of Saumur. Here, Hebrew scholarship flourished when various Maronites brought oriental learning to the attention of Christian scholars. This Arabic literature began to affect the Rabbinic tradition of interpretation. The result was that Capellus followed Elias Levita who taught the reformers, and denied the inspiration of the Hebrew vowel-points and accents, and the common Massoretic text, and insisted upon its revision through comparison with other Mss. and ancient versions. His view were generally accepted including the favour of Cocceius, the father of Federal Calvinism. The result was a series of great Polyglotts culminating in that of Brian Walton of London.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Briggs, The Rights, Duties and Limits of Biblical Criticism, Presbyterian Review, pp.563-564.

2. Ibid., pp.564-565.



Until 1648, Capellus work remained unanswered. In the meantime a Roman Catholic, a Frenchman, J. Morinus took Capellus line but argued for the need of a Church Authority and tradition. It became therefore a basis for an attack on the Protestant position. In response to this assault, the young Buxtorf began to argue for the scholastic position against Capellus. The universities of Sedan and Leijden were aroused against him, and under the influence of Heidegger and Turretine, the Universities of Zurich, Geneva and Basle rallied to the Zurich Consensus. This was adopted in 1675. It therefore asserted for the first and only time in the symbols of the Church the doctrine of verbal inspiration, together with the inspiration of accents and points.<sup>1</sup>

"Thus the formal principle of Protestantism was straightened, and its vital power destroyed by the erection of dogmatic barriers against Biblical criticism."<sup>2</sup>

This for Briggs resulted not only in the conflict between Brian Walton and John Owen over the inspiration of the vowel points, but between Charles Briggs and B.B. Warfield.

(c) The Westminster Divines - Not Scholastics

Briggs would justify this on two accounts. First, when the symbols of the Zurich Consensus are compared with the Westminster Confession, one sees immediately that verbal inspiration is not mentioned, and is "as free from a theory of inspiration as the creeds of the Reformation".<sup>3</sup> Second,

---

1. Ibid., p.565.

2. Ibid., p.565.

3. Ibid., p.567.



that the Westminster Divines were predominantly preachers, catechists, and expositors of the Scriptures, with a true evangelical spirit. He would seek to demonstrate this by quotations from the authors of the Confession and their associates. A few examples of these extracts will be sufficient for our purposes.

"They (the Papists) being asked, why they believe the Scripture to be the Word of God? Answer, because the Church says 'tis so ; and being asked againe, why they believe the Church? They answer, because the Scripture saies it shall be guided into truth ; and being asked againe, why they believe that very Scripture that says so? They answer, because the Church says 'tis Scripture, and so (with those in the Psalm XII:8), they walk in a circle on every side. They charge the like on us. (but wrongfully) that we believe the Word, because it sayes it self that it is so ; but we do not so resolve our faith ; we believe unto salvation, not the Word barely, because it witnesses to itself, but because the Spirit speaking in it to our consciences witnesses to them that it is the Word indeed ; we resolve not our Faith barely either into the Word, or Spirit as its single ultimate principle, into the testimony of the Spirit speaking to our consciences in the Word."<sup>1</sup>

"All language or writing is but the vessel, the symbol, or declaration of the rule, not the rule itself. It is a certain form or means by which the Divine truth cometh unto us, as things are contained in words, and because the doctrine and matters of the text is not made unto one, but by words and a language which I understand ; therefore I say, the Scripture

---

1. Herle, Charles (Prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly) 'Detur Sapienti', pp.152-153, London 1655 - quoted by Briggs in 'Duty and Limits of Criticism', Ibid., p.568.

in English is the rule and ground  
of my faith, and whereupon I relying  
have not a humane, but a divine  
authority for my faith."<sup>1</sup>

"For it is not the shell of the  
words, but the kernel of the matter  
which commends itself to the  
consciences of men, and that is the  
same in all languages. The Scriptures  
in English, no less than in Hebrew or  
Greek, display its lustre and exert  
its power and discovers the character  
of its divine original."<sup>2</sup>

(d) The Teaching of the Westminster Confession of Faith

Since Briggs was being tried by his Presbytery on  
the grounds of teaching contrary to their subordinate standards,  
it was necessary for him to justify his position as being  
consistent with the Westminster Confession of Faith.

He defends his position under six headings:

- (i) This is based on the following paragraph from  
the Confession:

"Therefore it pleased the Lord, at  
sundry times, and in divers manners, to  
reveal himself, and to declare that his  
will unto his Church ; and afterwards,  
for the better preserving and propagating  
of the truth, and for the more sure  
establishment and comfort of the Church  
against the corruption of the flesh, and  
the malice of Satan and of the world,  
to commit the same wholly unto writing."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Lyford, William, 'Plain Man's Sense Exercised', p.49 -  
quoted by Briggs in Whither? op.cit., p.66.
  2. Poole, Matthew, 'Blow at the Root', London, 1679, p.234 -  
quoted by Briggs in Whither? ibid., p.66.
  3. I.1, Westminster Confession of Faith.



It teaches, according to Briggs:

- (a) that God committed wholly unto writing that knowledge of God and of his will which is necessary to salvation. 'Which is necessary unto salvation' becomes the determinate phrase, thus excluding knowledge of geography and chronology, etc;
- (b) "If . . . God used holy penmen to commit this knowledge to writing, you cannot conclude that these penmen did not commit to writing, together with this knowledge of God necessary to salvation, other knowledge which was not necessary to salvation ; and if so, you cannot conclude that there were no errors in that matter which those men wrote, unless you can also prove that God commissioned them to commit this also to writing."<sup>1</sup>

(ii) In the first clause of Section 2, of Chapter 1, there appears the clause 'the Word of God written'. It was quoted by Briggs' opponents in the course of their specification of charges. He sees it merely as an explanation of the term 'Holy Scripture' which in the Confession at this point is identified with the canonical writings. By implication what it says is that the Book of Genesis is the word of God written, the Book of Exodus is the word of God written, etc. Briggs has no difficulty affirming this.<sup>2</sup>

(iii) Section 4, of Chapter 1, teaches that Holy Scripture 'is the Word of God'. This was used by Briggs' critics to argue that the Bible, in its entirety, is the Word of God over and against Briggs' thesis that the Bible

---

1. Defence, op.cit., p.93.

2. Ibid., pp.93-94.



'contains the Word of God'.

Briggs' reply is based on holding the phrases of the three standards, (The Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger Catechism, and the Shorter Catechism) together. They must be consistent with each other. The Larger Catechism teaches that 'the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience'. The Shorter Catechism, composed last and presupposing the other two, teaches that 'the word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him'. He concludes the Westminster documents must be so integrated as to enable one to say that the Bible is, and the Bible contains the word of God.

"The true Westminster document is the same that we have already seen, that the Bible contains the Word of God in that it contains the rule of faith and practice, and it is the Word of God because this rule of faith and practice so fills and pervades and controls Holy Scripture as to make it to all intents and purposes the Word of God."<sup>1</sup>

(iv) Section 8, Chapter 1, of the Confession speaks of the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek, being immediately inspired by God.

As we have already indicated from Briggs (p. he believes this has nothing to do with the original autographs but that the Hebrew and Greek copies we have in our hands are immediately inspired over and against the translations which are immediately inspired. The Passage cannot therefore be used to defend the inerrancy of the autographa.

---

1. Ibid., pp.95-96.

(v) Section 8, Chapter 1, goes on to say that by God's singular care and providence they have been kept pure in all ages'.

'Pure,' says Briggs, cannot mean 'inerrant' in every particular. 'Pure in the sense that what has been preserved of the Hebrew and Greek is authentic and can accomplish its purpose of salvation. The difficulty with those holding to inerrancy basing it on this section, is that it proves too much, for what is said to be pure is not the original autographs only but the texts presently available. And this they said of texts which they knew did not have in the Hebrew the accents and vowel-points as unchanged from the original.'<sup>1</sup>

(vi) Section 8, Chapter 1, goes on to say: 'Therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope'.

Briggs draws from this the conclusion that if the Word of God is heard in translations as well as through originals, then the Authority of Scripture is conveyed by the holy doctrine and facts of Scripture through every language under heaven. There ought not to be therefore, he argues, any view of inspiration and authority which "deifies original autographs" and "depreciates the translations which alone are accessible to the people of God."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., pp.99-102.

2. Ibid., p.103.



Briggs would therefore maintain that the Princeton exposition of the Confession is an imposition from their scholastic base.

(e) The History of Criticism Within Evangelical Christianity

Briggs reasons that those within Evangelicalism, who asserted the Reason, the Conscience and the Religious feeling over and against External authority, were very much a minority by the end of the seventeenth century.

The cause of Biblical Criticism was maintained at Oxford and Cambridge. Mill produced his Critical New Testament in 1707. He was assaulted for it but was defended by his friend Bentley who although not completing his work opened the way for a new era in literary criticism by the preparation of a still better text. The Methodist Revival was accompanied, according to Briggs, by a revival in Biblical Criticism. The Religious feeling was prevalent in Methodism ; the critical spirit of the Reformation in Bishop Lowth and his associates. Lowth opened up the literary features of the Bible in his work De Sacra Polsi Hebraeorum, 1758. Albert Schultens wrote an extensive work on the structure of the Semitic languages with a Philosophy of Language. J.D. Michaelis translated Lowth into German and became the Father of a revival there. Astruc the French physician, discovered the Jehouist and Elohist documents and their combinations in the Pentateuch. Kennicut published a monumental work on 'The State of the Printed Text of the Old Testament'. J.C. Wetstein in England and J.A. Bengel in Germany produced critical texts of the New Testament based on Mills. Gabler originated the discipline of Biblical Theology and Herder made the Old Testament the territory for German scholarship.



All these "were believing, God-fearing men".<sup>1</sup>

For Briggs, the Historical and literary side of exegesis had remained undeveloped up to the Reformation and beyond. The traditional views of the Jews as to the literature, religion and history of the Old Testament Scripture, and that of the Medieval Church was prevalent. But, since the Reformers were so free in their criticisms, and the Creeds and symbols of the Church were formulated before the issues in debate reached their climax in the latter half of the eighteenth century, it is those views which maintained the true Evangelical Spirit and are consistent with the doctrine of Scripture expressed in the Creeds which is the true inheritance of the Reformation.

Briggs recognises that in Germany and Switzerland, in the nineteenth century, the heirs of Biblical Criticism were divided into evangelical and rationalistic critics. He wishes to side with the former and encourages others to do so.<sup>2</sup>

### III. THE PHENOMENA OF SCRIPTURE

#### 1. The Divine and Human Factors in Scripture

It was a popular device of those holding to a Princetonian view of Scripture, to parallel the authority of Scripture with the Authority of Jesus Christ. It was stated that insofar as the Eternal word became human flesh, the authority expressed in the human nature was infallible

---

1. The Light, Duty and Limits of Biblical Criticism, op.cit., p.578.

2. Ibid., pp.576-579.

and without error. This, it was argued, did not minimise the weaknesses and frailty of human nature but insofar as the word was spoken through human nature what was received was the infallible word. Similarly God's external word is spoken through human language which is weak and inadequate, nevertheless, insofar as this is what God has chosen to use it becomes in his speaking the infallible and inerrant word.

Briggs rejected this thesis because he felt it was a distortion of Christology. In his defence before the Presbytery of New York he answered this thesis:

"When it is further said that the Bible is 'the human medium which tabernacles Jesus Christ, the word made Bible must be as perfect, as spotless, as infallible',<sup>1</sup> the prosecution teach a Christology which is contrary to the faith of the Church of God. The Bible is not Jesus Christ in the form of a book. The bible is not God manifest in the Scriptures in a sense parallel to God manifest in the flesh of Jesus Christ. The authority of the Bible and its infallibility is of a very different kind from the authority of the Incarnate Son of God. Its authority is in the divine revelation of the rule of faith and life for the redemption of men."<sup>2</sup>

Briggs states most clearly his understanding of the relationship between the Divine and human in Scripture in a discussion of the apparent conflict between the Shorter Catechism which speaks of the Word of God being contained in the Scriptures and the Larger Catechism which states the Scriptures are the word of God. Briggs argues that the

---

1. Stenographical Report, p.515.

2. Defence, op.cit., p.103.



narrower term needs to be comprehended within the broader term. The result is perceiving the Divine and human elements as substance and form respectively. Briggs justifies this interpretation by quotations from the Westminster Divines and their contemporaries with exposition.

Wallis, a mathematician and chief adviser in the construction of the Shorter Catechism wrote:

"The Scriptures in themselves are a lauthor rather than a light; they shine, indeed, but it is alieno lumine; it is not their own, but a borrowed light . . . They lose much of their original lustre by passing through this medium, and appear not so glorious to us as they are in themselves."<sup>1</sup>

Briggs interprets this as indicating a distinction between the light of the divine word itself and the case (letters, words and sentences) which encloses it. Human language is said to be inadequate, even when under the influence of the Spirit, the message is not complete and faultless.<sup>2</sup>

Briggs then proceeds to quote from Vines (a Westminster Divine) who says:

"For the Scripture stands not in cortice verborum, but in medulla sensus, it's the same wine in this vessel which was drawn out of that."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Wallis, Sermons, London 1791 - quoted by Briggs, Bible, Church and Reason, op.cit., p.101.
  2. Ibid., p.102.
  3. Vines, Common Sermons, London 1646 - quoted Ibid., p.102.



From Lyford:

"All language or writing is but the vessel, the symbol or declaration of the rule, not the rule itself. It is a certain form or means by which the divine truth cometh unto us, as things are contained in words."<sup>1</sup>

From Matthew Poole:

"For it is not the shell of the words, but the kernel of the matter which commends itself to the consciences of men, and that is the same in all languages."<sup>2</sup>

These quotes convince Briggs that for the Divines the relationship between the Divine and human in Scripture was that of substance to form. The Westminster Shorter Catechism uses the word contained in order to distinguish the shell, the case, the wineglass, from the contents of the divine word with regard to our faith and practice. Any errors will appear in the shell and not in the infallible content.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. The Logic and Stance re. The Phenomena

The stance that Briggs takes re. the phenomena of Scripture is that insofar as it is the form which contains the substance of truth there will appear in it, in peripheral and secondary matters inconsistencies and inadvertent error. These will in no way affect the Holy Spirit speaking through the religion, doctrine and ethics of the Bible wherein is received the infallible truth.

- 
1. Lyford, Plain Man's Sense Exercised - quoted, Ibid., p.102.
  2. Poole, Blow at the Root, London, 1679, - quoted, Ibid., p.103.
  3. Ibid., pp.103-104.

Briggs would seek therefore to use the inductive method untrammelled by dogma and scholastic tradition in examining the text of Scripture. He would affirm that his approach is less liable to err than that of the dogmatician. He sees the latter becoming more "complex, massive, consistent and, imposing".<sup>1</sup> This process is moving further and further away from the Bible, begins to reflect more "human and fallible minds, with defective logic" and "the temporary and provisional conditions and necessities of the times".<sup>2</sup> By allowing the Bible to speak directly through induction one is more liable to hear "the living and eternal substance".<sup>3</sup>

The process of induction must therefore, as Briggs observed, be in conflict with traditional views of the Bible. The Bible can be in no form, scholastic dogmas about the Bible. History, facts, truth, the law of thought, which induction reveals, are divine products and must be consistent with the Divine Word.

Briggs does recognise that the use of inductive logic is not without its challenge to his evangelical convictions re. the Authority of the Bible. It is here that Briggs objectivity is questioned and the influence of presuppositions, scholastic or evangelical is recognised.<sup>4</sup>

What he asks would happen if the results of the inductive method on the Phenomena of Scripture was in conflict with the teachings of the symbols of the Church or of the Bible's teaching about itself. This he admits is an

---

1. Biblical Study, op.cit., p.79.

2. Ibid., p.97.

3. Ibid., p.98.

4. Ibid., p.102.



embarrassing situation. He must choose either his critical results or the authority of Scripture. This he calls a dreaded alternative. It is a peril of scholarship. Modification may be necessary in the schools of thought, although he affirms that nothing so far discovered has disturbed the symbols of the Church. The attitude of the Rationalist is, says Briggs, because of his Rationalism. The attitude of the Evangelical because of his Evangelicalism.<sup>1</sup> ". . . the critics divide in accordance with their preconceptions".

In practical terms however, the Evangelical<sup>2</sup> critic will in the course of the conflict with the rationalist waive this preconception and seek to test the phenomena and justify his conclusions with inductive logic.<sup>3</sup>

In fact that such a method might prove errors in the phenomena is not a threat to Briggs doctrine of Biblical Authority.

### 3. Briggs and the Problems of the Phenomena

Briggs recognises that there are errors in the Phenomena in e.g. the New Testament use of the Old Testament especially the LXX. He lists four in particular in his defence before the Presbytery.<sup>4</sup> They appear in Matthew 27:9; Hebrews 11:21 ; Galatians 3:17 ; and Acts 7:16. These are all instances of misquotations or misreadings of what is already present in the LXX.

---

1. Ibid., pp.172-173.

2. Ibid., p.173.

3. Ibid., p.173.

4. Defence, op.cit., pp.106-108.



Although advocating with zeal the activity of textual criticism he thinks it absurd to imagine that the original autographs will be devoid of such errors.

"It discredits the scientific work of textual criticism to make conjectures as to an original text different from the best one we can find after we have exhausted the resources of criticism."<sup>1</sup>

The Phenomena with its discrepancies is not therefore a problem for the theology of Briggs as it is for Warfield. The area in which Briggs must, most clearly express the relationship between the phenomena and the authority of the phenomena is in his statement on the Canonicity of Scripture. There is a recognised tension between what has historically evolved as the Canon of Protestantism and the grounds for Briggs view of Canonicity which is the authentication of God by his Spirit speaking to our hearts through these particular writings.

Briggs' starting point is that of the Reformers, who, he argues, used the text of canonicity 'God himself speaking in and through the Scriptures to his people', to question the traditions of the early Church which had followed the Hellenistic rather than the Palestinian Jews in their use of the LXX and the Apocryphal writings. They, using the same principle, did not hesitate to dispute the Jewish traditions and therefore did not exclude the apocryphal writings for 'Jewish reasons'. Rome's different canon was due to their reliance on tradition.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.101.

2. Biblical Study, op.cit., pp.109-110.

This principle of the Reformation which Briggs calls 'the Evangelical Critical Test', did not solve all the problems and left some books in doubt. This, says Briggs, is a problem concerning the extent of the Canon not of the authority of those writings already considered canonical. The critical principle of the reformers had not failed, he believes.

"We are convinced that the Church has not been deceived with regard to its inspiration. Esther, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, and the Apocalypse will more and more establish themselves in the hearts of those who study them"<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the growing scholasticism, Briggs maintained that the Westminster Divines held to the same critical principle using the testimony of the Church with the internal evidence of the Scriptures as leading to nothing more than probability apart from the fides divina.

In response to his Princeton colleagues charge that this was a form of mysticism and that canonicity was a purely historical question, he reasoned that their position was essentially that of the Roman Catholic Church.

"The difference then amounts to this: At what historic point shall we stand, or, on what historic names shall we base our faith in the canon? Shall we go with Lowe and base the canon on the authority of the Living Church as the heir of Catholic tradition, or shall we go with the XXXIX Articles and rely on the authority of Jerome and the Jewish Assembly at Jamnia, or shall we accept the consensus of the Ante-Nicene Church and share their doubts as well as their certainties?"<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Biblical Study, Ibid., p.111.

2. Ibid., p.125.



Briggs' basic thesis is again reiterated, faith based on history leads to uncertainty and fallible authority.

Briggs reinforces this by demonstrating how criticism has undermined in particular the relation of the Jews to their canon:

- (a) The Septuagint is seen not to be the work of 72 accomplished scholars chosen from the twelve tribes of Israel but a sort of Greek Targum emerging out of the heads of the synagogue worship and from the desire of the Hellenistic Jews to collect together the religious literature of their nation. It includes apocryphal and canonical literature without discrimination.
- (b) The claim that the Old Testament canon was determined by the men of the Great Synagogue is based upon an Elias Lenta and long Jewish tradition going back to slender support in the Misnaic Tract (Aboth). Beyond this there is no evidence whatever. The silence, Briggs finds unnatural. The Apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings are silent. Philo and Josephus says nothing of such a gathering. The Apocalypse of Ezra from the first century A.D. represents the whole canon as being determined by Ezra. Could he have done this if the Great Synagogue had met? asks Briggs. And would the disputes have gone on among the Jews in the first century A.D. if the Great Synagogue had met? This whole tradition Briggs would treat as legend.
- (c) Philo and Josephus. In a supposed writing of Philo in the 1st century, the writer speaks of the Law, the prophets, hymns and other writings but without specification. However, says Briggs, this work has been proven to have been written in the third century A.D. and



not by Philo. Philo's testimony is reduced to the books which he quotes as having authority. He omits to mention Nehemiah, Ruth, Esther, Chronicles, Ezekiel, Lamentations, Daniel, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs.

Josephus mentions 22 books as making up his canon; 5 of the law, 13 of the prophets, and 4 of poems and precepts, but does not define what they are.

(d) Briggs reckons that it was not until the Council of Jamnia in A.D.70, that the Jewish canon was settled. He does not question that for the Palestinian Jews no books were added after the time of Judas Maccabeus, but he is convinced that the Pharisees debated the canonicity of these books until Jamnia and that the Hellenistic Jews had a freer conception of the canon.

(e) The New Testament does not clearly specify that its writers knew a definite division of Law, prophets and other writings. It does not quote from books disputed among the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

When Briggs turns to the New Testament he recognises that throughout the Church there have been a few of the New Testament books in dispute, but believes the preponderance of testimony is in favour of their acceptance to-day.

"The books of primary and secondary authority have kept the same relative position. Those doubted among the Jews were doubted by Christians. Those doubted in the early Church were doubted by the reformers, and are doubted by some critics now. In giving

---

1. Ibid., pp.131-132.

our testimony to the canonicity of all books specified in the Reformed Creeds, we do it on the principles of criticism laid down by the reformers and tested by the finds of modern investigation. But we recognise that the evidence for some is less than for others."<sup>1</sup>

#### IV. A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO THE SCRIPTURES

##### 1. Briggs' Positive Attitude to Scientific Criticism

Criticism is perceived by Briggs as a method of knowledge.<sup>2</sup> The process of knowledge through sense - perception, the intuitions and the reasoning powers are fallible and unreliable. It is because human knowledge is always a mixture of the true and the false, criticism is necessary.

"Criticism is the test of the certainty of knowledge, the method of its verification."<sup>3</sup>

Criticism is therefore constantly sifting the evidence, reviewing the arguments. It is, on the one hand, destructive, detecting and destroying the false. It is, on the other, constructive testing and rearranging facts and truths in their proper order. But since criticism is itself a branch of human knowledge it is defective and will require constant revision and rectification.

"Criticism refines the crude oil of knowledge. It cleanses and polishes the rough diamond of thought. It removes the dross from the gold of wisdom. Criticism searches all departments of knowledge as a torch of fire consuming

---

1. Ibid., p.133.

2. Biblical Study, op.cit., p.78.

3. Ibid., p.79.

the hay, straw and stubble, that the truth of God may shine forth in its majesty and certainty as the imperishable and eternal."<sup>1</sup>

Briggs recognises that Traditionalism and man's inherent conservatism in order to preserve his security, has made criticism largely destructive, but he points to the post-Reformation critical spirit which has resulted in the age of "wonderful progress in all departments of human knowledge."<sup>2</sup>

The Principles of Criticism which Briggs would seek to apply to the Bible he places under three categories. First General Criticism which establishes the fundamental laws of thought which must not be violated e.g. the laws of identity, of contradiction, of exclusion, of sufficient reason, of probation.<sup>3</sup>

Second, Historical Criticism gives the principles of historic<sup>a</sup> genesis. All history passes through various stages, oral, written, monumental. This must be traced back to ascertain its genuineness. It will involve examining the order and process of the development of the material through which some of the excrescences may be removed from the original. The character of the material will also be considered to determine reliability;

". . . whether it is in accordance with the experience of material, and so natural; or contrary to that

---

1. Ibid., p.80.

2. Ibid., p.81.

3. It is significant that in a footnote Briggs refers to the mentors of Princeton, the Scottish Realist Philosophers, Sr. Wm. Hamilton and James McCosh, and their works on 'Logic' and 'Laws of Discursive Thought', respectively as examples of how to reason correctly.



experience, and so unnatural or supernatural; whether it is in harmony with itself and consistent with its own conditions and circumstances . . . ."1

Finally, the value of material as evidence will be assessed in terms of its nearness or remoteness to that to which it bears witness; whether it is an original or secondary source.

Briggs reasons that if sources of history cannot bear this criticism, they are not reliable sources.

"The application of these simple tests remove from the pages of history numberless legends, fables and myths, and determines the residuum of truth and fact that underlies them"2

Third, Literary Criticism, from which Biblical Criticism derives its chief principles and methods. Literary criticism is first concerned with the text. Mss., versions and citations will be consulted to discover the originals.<sup>3</sup>

Certain laws have been discovered which are applicable to the transmission of books. Errors in the text may be due to careless/ignorance or inadvertence in the copyist. Errors in translation may be because of lack of knowledge of the original, or through defective judgment.

---

1. Ibid., pp.83-84.

2. Ibid., p.84.

3. It is important to note that Briggs recommends Warfield's paper on 'The Greek Testament of Westcott and Hort' in the Presbyterian Review, III, 1882, as a guide to this area of Literary Criticism.

Errors in citation may be due to slips of memory or adaptation for a specific purpose. There may also be errors in the text due to wear and tear of the Mss.

The value and relative authority of the Mss. having been determined, the relative value of the readings can then be examined. This will be determined by:

- (a) a reading which lies at the root of the variations;
- (b) the most difficult reading most likely in that the scribe has the natural tendency to simplify;
- (c) the reading most in accord with the intent and style of the author.

These principles are applicable to all ancient texts, not just the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup>

Having acquired the best text Literary Criticism begins to ask higher questions of the literature - hence Higher Criticism. Four questions will be asked of the literature.

- (1) As to the integrity of the writings :  
Who wrote it? How many authors? Is this the original or has it been edited or interpolated? Can we distinguish the original from the interpolation?
- (2) As to the authenticity of the writings :  
Is it anonymous, pseudonymous, or does it bear the author's name? Is the title genuine?

---

1. Ibid., pp.85-86.

(3) As to literary features :

What of the author's style and method of composition?

(4) As to the credibility of the writings :

Is the writing reliable? Are the statements coloured and warped with prejudice and superstition? Does the author have a reliable character in terms of prudence and integrity?<sup>1</sup>

The answers to these questions, will be determined by internal and external evidences. Examples of internal evidence would be whether or not the writing in question is in accord with its supposed historic position as to time, place and circumstances or, differences of style may imply differences of age or experience of the same author or perhaps different authors. Examples of external evidence would be positive testimony as to the writings in other sources or the silence of authorities who were allegedly contemporary with the writings.<sup>2</sup>

Briggs illustrates how when these principles of Higher Criticism are applied to the Apostles' Creed, it can be shown that it was not composed by the Apostles but, over a long period of time did not reach its present format until about 750 A.D.<sup>3</sup>

The question Briggs raises is, Does the nature of the Bible mean that it is above criticism? Briggs recognises that the nature of the Scriptures may give additional features of criticism to test the claims respecting it, but that it in no way creates apriori objections to the critical analysis of the Bible.<sup>4</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.87.

2. Ibid., pp.89-90.

3. Ibid., pp.92-93.

4. Ibid., p.95.



Briggs distinguishes between Dogmatic views of the Bible, views of the Bible expressed in the Symbols and the Bible's views of itself. For him, only the dogmas of some theologians would bind the critic. The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible is not in peril through criticism only some theories of Biblical Inspiration and Authority.

The conflict is for Briggs between those who wish to make logical deductions from the symbols of the Church with regard to the Bible and how it may be treated or to push forth using the inductive method starting with the Bible and moving towards the symbols.

The critical analysis of the Bible will therefore result in a Biblical Theology of Inspiration and Authority.

"Unless traditional theories of inspiration can vindicate themselves on Bible grounds, meet the critics and overcome them in fair conflict, in the sacred fields of the Divine Word, sooner or later traditional theories will be driven from the field. It will not do to antagonise critical theories of the Bible with traditional theories of the Bible, for the critic appeals to history against tradition, to an array of facts against so-called inferences, to the laws of probation against dogmatic assertion, to the Divine Spirit speaking in the Scriptures against external authority. History, facts, truth, the laws of thought, are all divine products, and most consistent with the Divine Word, and they will surely prevail."<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Ibid., pp.102-103.

## 2. Briggs' use of the Tools of Science in Biblical Criticism.<sup>1</sup>

As an evangelical critic, Briggs believes his use of the tools of science re. the Bible is different from the dogmatists and the rationalists. His approach is threefold; first, he inquires what the Scriptures teach about themselves, and separates this divine authority from all other authority : second, the principles of Higher Criticism would be applied to decide questions not decided by divine authority; and third, questions not settled by one and two would be answered through tradition.

The only real tension that could exist between Higher Criticism and Biblical Authority, is if the sacred books were discovered to have characteristics inconsistent with the doctrine of Inspiration and Authority of Scripture. It is possible that the conflict is over just a theory, not a biblical or symbolical doctrine. But if the conflict is real then the critic must choose, rationalistic criticism has chosen for criticism rather than the Biblical doctrine.<sup>2</sup>

Briggs believes that the higher criticism of the Bible and the literary study of the Bible is synonymous. To rightly understand the Bible, it is not only necessary, says Briggs, to have a religious spirit, but a linguistic training, background of history and geography, a knowledge of its theology and in addition:

- 
1. Briggs' advocacy of Textual Criticism and its implications for Biblical Inspiration we have already observed (see p.284). Both Briggs and Warfield are agreed as to the virtues of lower criticism we shall therefore major on this area of disagreement, i.e. the tools of science applied in the sphere of higher criticism.
  2. Ibid., pp.170-173.

"a literary training, an aesthetic culture, in order that by a true literary sense, and a sensitive and refined aesthetic taste, we may discriminate poetry from prose, fact from fiction, the bare truth from its artistic dress and decoration, the fruit of reasoning from the products of the imagination and fancy."<sup>1</sup>

One needs therefore to be immersed in Semitic Literature but having done that one can see that Biblical literature has the same problems to solve as other literature. There are questions of integrity, authenticity, literary form and credibility.

(i) The Integrity of the Scriptures

The questions here are concerned with whether or not this is the product of one author and has it retained its original integrity or has it been interpolated? Briggs gives illustrations as to how the critics have answered these questions re. the Bible.

The Psalter is seen to be composed of 150 Psalms in 5 books. The orthodox Rabbinical theory of the Old Testament contained in the Baba Bathra tract makes David the editor, and states that he used with his own Psalms those of ten worthy men. Some held that David wrote them all. Calvin and others made Ezra the editor. Higher Criticism has shown the Psalm-book to be made up of a number of collections and has passed through various editings. Some critics argue that what we possess is the psalm-book of the first Temple, but the majority think it was for the second Temple.

---

1. Ibid., p.215.



Isaiah, according to the Baba Bathra, was edited by the College of Hezekiah. Some critics have questioned its integrity and see it as a collection from various loosely associated prophets. It is generally accepted in Europe, (says Briggs) that the first half of Isaiah was written during the time of the prophet, and the second half was written by an unknown prophet of the exile. It is recognised that some still seek to preserve Isaiah's integrity.

Interpolations are recognised in the LXX re Jeremiah, Daniel and Esther and e.g. in the New Testament in Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:1-11.<sup>1</sup>

These questions and answers in the sphere of integrity do not affect, argues Briggs, the Authority of Scripture. If the editing and interpolating were under the inspiration of the Spirit this will give the final product the same authority as the original. If the interpolations are of a different character as in the apocryphal additions to Daniel and Esther<sup>2</sup>, they should be removed from the Bible. However since

" . . . we prove the inspiration of the authors from the authority of the writings rather than the authority of the writings from the inspiration of the authors ; the authority of the Bible is not disturbed by any changes in traditional opinion as to these writings."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Ibid., pp.217-218.

2. Ibid., p.219.

3. Ibid., p.220.

(ii) The Authenticity of the Scriptures

In this area, the critic wants to know if the author's name is given in connection with the writing? Is it anonymous? Is it pseudonymous? Is it a compilation?

Briggs recognises that the Synagogue and the Church has traditional authors for most of the Biblical books, but to question authorship is not to question the authenticity of the writing. Is it possible that the authors given have been appended by inspired editors or attached in the Rabbinical or Christian schools.

If a writing does not claim to have been written by a certain author, how can its authority be undermined if the traditional view is shown to be false?

Since no reputable critic, according to Briggs, argues that any of the canonical writings are forgeries then questions of authorship will not destroy a high view of Scripture.

Briggs lists as anonymous books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Jonah, Ruth, many of the Psalms, Lamentations and the Epistle to the Hebrews. Any argument, says Briggs, that claims specific authorship on the basis of the writings is based on preconceptions and dogmatic considerations.

Since pseudonymity and forgery are not synonymous as is evident even in contemporary writing, Briggs sees no reason why an author may not use a surname to conceal his identity. He quotes Calvin as suggesting that the prophecy of Malachi was written by Ezra, using Malachi as a surname. The conservative Old Testament scholars, Keil and Delitzsch



recognise Ecclesiastes as a pseudonym using Solomon's name. If one is possible, says Briggs, there can be no apriori objections as to why Daniel or Deuteronomy are not also pseudonyms.

The historical books of Kings and the Gospel of Luke represent themselves as compilations. The question is are other historical books compilations e.g. the Gospels of Matthew and Mark and the Pentateuch.

Briggs argues throughout his writings for the non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and that it was

"composed of four separate historical narratives, each with its code of legislation, and that these have been compacted into their present form by one or more editors."<sup>1</sup>

It is in his reply to the Papal Commission which in 1906 had given its backing to the Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch, that his arguments against it are most concisely stated.

He gives four.<sup>2</sup> First, that the language of the four documents is so different, that they must have been composed by different authors, because the differences represent different centuries in the historical development of the Hebrew language.

Second, diversity of style highlights these differences of author and time. There is such diversity, that Briggs contrasts as parallel his contemporary dogmatists

1. Ibid., p.227. His most detailed defence of his thesis is, in 'The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch', Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1893.
2. Briggs, C.A. and Baron Friedrich Von Hugel, The Papal Commission and the Pentateuch, Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1906.



such as Billott and Jaussen with the medieval schoolmen like Duns Scotus and Bonaventura.

Third, the institutions indicate very different periods of history. Fourth, the strongest argument is from Biblical Theology. There is a history of doctrine in Israel as in the Church and the documents of the Pentateuch reflect such a development.

"The document that we name E goes in general with the Ephraimitic prophets Amos and Hosea, the document J with the early prophets of Judah; D, Deuteronomy, is nearest to Jeremiah; and P to Ezekiel and the Chronicles."<sup>1</sup>

These four lines of argument are, based, according to Briggs, on facts not theories. The evidence he believes is overwhelming and can only be denied through prejudice.

Again Briggs is convinced that the authenticity of the Bible with God as its author and the authenticity of the books with the authors unknown are two separate questions.<sup>2</sup>

### (iii) The Literary Forms of the Scriptures

Briggs observed that this was a neglected area of Higher Criticism because most of the critics' energies were channelled into debating authenticity, integrity and credibility in the writings. Having divided Biblical literature into poetry and prose he subdivides the prose

---

1. Ibid., p.13.

2. Biblical Study, op.cit., p.228.

literature into four varieties, History, Oration, Epistle and Fiction. Because of their controversial nature we shall concentrate on the first and last only in our exposition.

HISTORY: In the Old Testament Briggs notes two varieties of history, priestly and prophetic. The former is somewhat devoid of imagination and the artistic sense. It has an annalistic style. The latter is descriptive in style and graphic in delineation. In the New Testament there is biography and history. In their writing of history they gathered their sources as historians from existing materials. The question is are any sources unworthy to be used by inspired historians? What of legends and myths?

If a legend by implication was false, this would exclude it from use, but if it is the mere poetical embellishment of bare facts there is no reason for exclusion. Myths are more difficult because they imply polytheism or pantheism. Monotheistic Myth is recognised by Briggs as possible, but to avoid misconception he would seek to avoid the term. However, insofar as imagination is present in Hebrew History it is to be expected that these artistic elements will be present in e.g. prophetic historians.

FICTION: This is present in the New Testament in the parables of Jesus. It is also possible that Esther and Jonah is fiction.

"Any apriori objection to function as unworthy of inspiration is debarred by the parables of Jesus."<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.238.

(iv) The Credibility of the Scriptures

This we have already considered before under Inerrancy (see p.294). Briggs admits that Higher Criticism

"comes into conflict with the authority of Scripture when it finds that its statements are not authoritative and its revelations are not credible."<sup>1</sup>

But he maintains that to make the Bible incredible something more must be presented other than trivial matters and minute aspects of the text which do not affect the author's scope of argument or his religious instructions.<sup>2</sup>

3. The Scientific Methods and Biblical Theology

Biblical Theology is that area in the writings of Briggs where scholarship and devotion meet. The contribution of Biblical Theology to the knowledge of God has already been briefly expounded. At this point we are more concerned with how the tools of science are applied in Briggs understanding of Biblical Theology and the implication for holding devotion and scholarship together.

Briggs wishes to see authentic Biblical Theology emerging out of a conflict between four attitudes or spirits with which people approach the Bible. There is the mystical where the religious is emphasised to the neglect of the doctrinal and ethical. There is the scholastic with its passion for system and logic, in this the doctrinal prevails

---

1. Ibid., p.243.

2. Ibid., p.243.



over the religious and ethical. The speculative spirit is distinguished by an intense rationality and morality. In it the ethical prevails over the religious and the doctrinal. In the evangelical spirit, all these tendencies are held together in unity.

"It is above all vital union and communion with the Divine God in the form of divine appointment, and the love and service of God and the brethren with all the faculties. It uses the form in order to the substance. It is inquiring, obedient, devout, and reformatory. It combines the subject and the object of knowledge, and aims to realise the ideal. It unites the devotional with the legal and moral habits and attitudes. It strives to unite in the Church the various types of human experience in order to complete manhood, and the completion of the Kingdom of God in the golden age of the Messiah."<sup>1</sup>

This evangelical spirit Briggs traces through the reformation battling with dogmatism and rationalism (see p. At times it was almost crushed. But in the nineteenth century, he sees since Schleiermacher its growth so as to become a potent reconciling force.<sup>2</sup>

Briggs then gives an historical account of the rise and development of Biblical Theology in the context of the conflict between theological types. The man, for Briggs who laid the foundations for Biblical Theology was J.F. Gabler. It was he who presented the historical principle as the distinguishing feature of Biblical Theology. There then

---

1. Ibid., p.320.

2. Ibid., p.373.

followed him men like Lorenzo, Baur and De Wette who sought to trace using the historical principle the universal religion and with it the universal principles for all time, in the Bible. This required interaction with the historical milieu in which biblical religion developed. The weakness is an external unity without any organic interrelation of the various doctrines and types of the Scriptures themselves.<sup>1</sup>

The second major stage in the development of Biblical Theology was in reaction to Strauss', 'Life of Jesus' which highlighted the apparent incompetence of the New Testament writers as witnesses and the complimentary work of F. Baur who through the historico-critical process sought to demonstrate the natural development of Christianity and that the actual teachings of Jesus preserved were minimal. Neander, sought to present a life of Jesus using the historico-critical method and in it, according to Briggs, introduced a new principle whereby

"He sought to distinguish the individualities of the various sacred writers in their conception of Christianity and to write them in a higher unity."<sup>2</sup>

From the principles laid down by Gabler and Neander other developments in Biblical Theology included the recognition by Schmid of Tübingen that it belonged to the department of Exegetical Theology in Theological Encyclopaedia. It is therefore distinguished from Systematic Theology because of its historical character and from Historical Theology because of its limitation to the Biblical writings of the New Testament. Reuss of Strasburg emphasised in his writings

---

1. Ibid., pp.375-377.

2. Ibid., p.378.



the religious milieu in which the New Testament emerged. Many of the writers sought to highlight the "higher unity" in the Scriptures, often without success.

Biblical Theology in the Old Testament was not moving with such ease as in the New. It needed, says Briggs,

"a great overturning of the soil of the Old Testament by a radical critical study of its religion and history such as Strauss had made in the New Testament."<sup>1</sup>

This was carried out, he believed by Graf, Kuenen and Wellhausen who distinguished the codes and sections in the Pentateuch, found antagonistic elements in the Old Testament and began a radical reconstruction of Old Testament religion and history. As there is now recognised the sermons in the New Testament theologies which are held together in a higher unity so Briggs is encouraged to embrace these Old Testament findings and to seek out of them a final system above them both.

There is now emerging, says Briggs, a third stage in Biblical Theology. Exegetical Theology will have Biblical Theology as a point of contact and

" . . . with the three other great sections of Theological Encyclopaedia, will show the true relation of its various types to one organic system of divine truth, will trace them each and all to their supernatural origin and direction as distinguished from the ordinary types of human thinking; and thus will act as a conserving and a reconciling force in the theology<sup>2</sup> of the last quarter of our century."

---

1. Ibid., p.385.

2. Ibid., p.390.



Briggs would now seek to set out more clearly what he understands Biblical Theology to be and its importance.

"Biblical Theology is that theological discipline which presents the Theology of the Bible in its historical formation within the canonical writings."<sup>1</sup>

This discipline is therefore concerned strictly with the Bible and considers other theologies contemporaneous with the Bible only insofar as they had a positive or negative influence on Biblical Theology. Unlike many of Briggs more radical colleagues he will not allow other religions to be more than an influence from without, rather than from within as a regulative principle. Revelation is therefore to be distinguished in the doctrines of the Bible, from any other doctrines.

As a Theology of the Bible, Briggs would distinguish this discipline from Dogmatics which he sees as apriori and deductive in method. Dogmatics seeks to deduce dogma from the Bible and arrange it in logical sequence as determined by philosophy or Church tradition. Biblical Theology seeks the doctrines of the Bible in their simplicity and in their concrete form. It is not concerned with the logical consequences. The only consequences which concern a Biblical theologian, in this sense, are the historical ones as themes are brought to maturity in advanced periods of revelation. Briggs is not deprecating Systematic Theology which he considers necessary but wants to show that Biblical Theology is narrower in its focus.

---

1. Ibid., p.390.

Biblical Theology is therefore said to be the Theology of the Bible in historical formation, but always looking for the unity in the variety,

"ascertains the roots of the divergencies, traces them each in their separate historical developments, shows them co-operation in the formation of one organic system."<sup>1</sup>

Briggs would place Biblical Theology in the department of Exegetical Theology as a 'higher exegesis'. Completing that process and presenting the essential material and principles of the other departments of Theology.

He distinguishes it as a part of Exegetical Theology from Historical Theology, because of the difference in sources. The sources of Biblical Theology, unlike Historical Theology, constitute a body of divine revelation. They have an absolute authority which the sources of Historical Theology may not have. This discipline must therefore be kept separate.

Within Exegetical Theology, Biblical Theology is the crowning achievement. All other branches are presupposed by it. When Higher Criticism has done its work, Biblical canonics have determined the extent and authority of the sacred writings, Textual Criticism has ascertained a primitive text, Hermeneutics has laid the rules for Interpretation and Exegesis has applied those rules to the passage; Biblical Theology begins by accepting the rules and results given to it. It will then engage in a work of higher exegesis;

---

1. Ibid., p.396.



"namely, rising from the comparison of verse with verse, and paragraph with paragraph, where simple exegesis is employed, to the still more difficult and instructive comparison of writing with writing, author with author, period with period, until by generalisation and synthesis the theology of the Bible is attained as as organic whole."<sup>1</sup>

The method of the Biblical Theology, is, says Briggs, a blending of the genetic and inductive methods.

Because of its place in the Theological Encyclopaedia it must show the theology of the Bible in its historic foundation, i.e. ascertain its genesis and development. The area of genesis is what separates the rationalist from the evangelical. The fundamental differences between Biblical religion and the religions of the Semitic world make Briggs a supernaturalist and claim the genesis in Theophany and Christophany.

In order to exhibit the unity of the Scriptures in its diversity Biblical Theology, for Briggs, must employ the inductive method and the synthetic process. This is the true method of Exegetical Theology. This highest form of exegesis, Briggs admits, is comparatively undeveloped.

When the genetic and the inductive methods combine the excellence of the system of Biblical Theology is discovered, however an undue emphasis on either will make the system defective and inharmonious.<sup>2</sup>

The system and divisions of Biblical Theology are determined, according to Briggs, chiefly by the methods

---

1. Ibid., p.398.

2. Ibid., pp.399-401.



of dealing with it. Briggs believes the divisions ought to be simple to allow both elementary and developed conceptions to be incorporated within them. He begins by looking for the dominant principle of the entire revelation so as to make the historical and inductive divisions in accordance with it. This he believes to be the Covenant. It has a great variety of forms but essentially is expressed in the Old Covenant at Sinai and the New Covenant in Jesus the Messiah.

From this Covenant flows the synthetic divisions. The Covenant is Personal and has to do with Religion. The Covenant is intelligible and calls for reflection and reasoning and has to do with doctrine. (The doctrines of God, Man and Redemption). The Covenant addresses man as a moral being ; it has therefore to do with Ethics. These distinctions apply to all periods of revelation.<sup>1</sup>

Briggs gives some guidelines as to how the synthetic and historical divisions may be viewed. He thinks it necessary in each period, first, to determine the development of each particular doctrine by itself, as its start from the general principle and second, sum up the general results before passing over into another period.<sup>2</sup>

Within the Biblical record there are different types whose organic unity must be exposed, e.g. J.E.D. and P. in the Pentateuch revealing the Torah of Israel, the four Gospels presenting the one Christ, the theologies of the Epistles affirming apostolic belief. From these and others finally:

---

1. Ibid., p.407.

2. Ibid., p.404.

" . . . the whole Bible will be considered, showing not only the unity of the Theology of Christ and his Apostles, but also the unity of the Theology of Moses and David and all the prophets, with the Theology of Jesus and his Apostles, as each distinct theology takes its place in the advancing system of divine revelation, all conspiring to the completion of a perfect, harmonious, symmetrical organism, the infallible expression of God's will, character,<sup>1</sup> and being to his favoured children."

#### V. BRIGGS' USE OF SCRIPTURE

In this the last section dealing with Briggs' use of the concept 'infallible', we are going to examine how he uses what he believes to be infallible.

First, we expound his own views on Interpretation of the Bible. Second, we shall ask the questions formulated by David Kelsey,<sup>2</sup> of Briggs as we did of Warfield. Third, there will be a description of Briggs at work on the text, exegesis and applying passages specifically related to his understanding of the Scriptures witness to Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

1. Briggs described his method of Biblical Interpretation as a pyramid of Exegesis. It starts with a broad base on common ground with rationalists, evangelicals, scholastics and mystics. Since the Bible is composed of a body of literature certain fundamental principles will be in accord with all forms of literary interpretation. The Bible however has principles unique to its own character. There are 7 steps on this pyramid from base to apex.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.405.

2. Kelsey, D., The Use of Scripture in Recent Theology, op.cit.

3. Biblical Study, op.cit., pp.351-352.



(1) Grammatical Interpretation

Since the Bible is written in human languages we must master them and thoroughly understand their grammar. We must therefore become philologists or become dependent upon philologists. Much erroneous traditional exegesis is due to the failure of grammatical study and the use of the LXX and the vulgate versions.

The progress in linguistic studies, in New Testament Greek, Old Testament Hebrew and their cognates has opened new vistas for grammatical understanding of the Bible.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Logical and Rhetorical Interpretation

(a) Logical

The laws of thought are culturally conditioned. the Bible is not faultless in its logic, partly because all human logic is fallible and is maturing and that the modes of our judgments may be logically different from the Bibles. Our responsibility is:

"to seek for the method of reasoning of the Biblical author; his plan, his scope, his course of argument, and the relation of his methods to those of his contemporaries."<sup>2</sup>

Briggs would have us note that not all Biblical writers are alike logical ; the methods of Paul are not those of the mystic John, etc.

---

1. Ibid., pp.352-353.

2. Ibid., pp.354-355.



(b) The Rhetorical

This is closely connected with the logical. Often the Bible is judged by Greek or Western European models. The logical and rhetorical parts ought to be discriminated.

"In rhetorical exegesis it is essential to discriminate poetry from prose, the different kinds of poetry and prose from each other, the style of each author, as well as the literary peculiarities of the people and race which produced the Bible."<sup>1</sup>

(3) Historical Interpretation

At this the third stage, differences begin to arise between rationalistic and other interpreters depending upon the presuppositions of the exegete. The evangelical recognises the supernatural as the determining factor in history, the rationalist will try to explain all by natural laws. While some exaggerate the supernatural, Briggs believes the true method is to start with the natural and rise from it to the supernatural. One ought to see history impregnated with the supernatural rather than on the surface. Only when the natural cannot accomplish the divine purpose is the supernatural brought into play. It is only therefore when no natural explanation is possible for the phenomena is the supernatural to be accredited with the explanation.<sup>2</sup>

(4) Comparative Interpretation

The rationalists, says Briggs, sees the Bible as a bundle of miscellaneous and heterogeneous writings. The scholastic regards them as a homogeneous mass. The evangelical

---

1. Ibid., p.351.

2. Ibid., pp.357-358.

recognises that the authors are of the school of the Holy Spirit and an organic unity is to be expected. But this unity springs from an amazing variety.<sup>1</sup>

(5) The Use of the Literature of Interpretation

How far are we to go in allowing ourselves to be influenced by the history of exegesis? asks Briggs. He naturally rejects the Roman position of normative interpretation in tradition because they have proven to be false. However, he believes them to be invaluable in raising the correct questions to be answered, in preventing a waste of time in doing what others have done before and in directing us to the fruitful soil of the Bible."<sup>2</sup>

(6) Doctrinal Interpretation

At this point Briggs would part company with the scholastics who, according to him, would establish as 'the rule of faith' for doctrinal interpretation and external and therefore apriori system in the symbols and confessions of the Church. The analogy of faith means for Briggs an internal rule whereby with the aid of Biblical Theology, he is able to trace tension and harmony in the development of doctrine in the Bible. The fact e.g. that Peter, John and Paul have different theologies does not destroy their unity in Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup>

(7) Practical Interpretation

This is, for Briggs, the apex of the pyramid of interpretation. Here it is recognised that this book is from God and tends to him. To understand the Bible we must master

---

1. Ibid., pp.358-359.

2. Ibid., pp.360-361.

3. Ibid., pp.361-362.



it. We need the master key. To know the Bible we must know God and his Christ. He is the key. The Scriptures cannot be understood from the outside alone but from its heart - its Christ. Everywhere one goes in Scripture we find Christ. We must be at one with the author to interpret his book.

To reach the summit we must climb using the lower stages of exegesis until we reach the apex.

The principle Briggs is expounding is his view of the Holy Spirit being the supreme interpreter of Scripture. This is what he believed made the Puritan faith and life invincible.<sup>1</sup>

2. The four questions which D.Kelsey formulated and which were asked of Warfield, we shall now enquire of Briggs.

Question 1. : What aspect(s) of Scripture is (are) taken to be authoritative? Is it the concepts in Scripture, or the doctrines, or the historical reports, or the liturgical utterances, or the 'symbols', or some combination of these or something else?

Answer : Unlike Warfield, for Briggs not everything affirmed in Scripture is authoritative, but all doctrines and matters which speak regarding the faith and morality of men and those elements and concepts inseparably related to such a purpose.

Question 2. : What is it about this aspect of Scripture that makes it authoritative?

Answer : The Scriptures being inspired of God for this purpose. They are therefore authoritative in the accomplishment of this purpose.

---

1. Ibid., p.365.



Question 3. : What sort of logical force seems to be ascribed to the Scripture to which appeal is made? Has it the force of a descriptive report, of an injunction, of an emotive ejaculation, is it self-involving?

Answer : In so far as the recognition of the Authority of Scripture is impossible apart from personal appropriation and authentication, it is the logic of self-involvement.

Question 4. : How is the Scripture that is cited brought to bear on theological proposals so as to authorise them?

Answer : Briggs would use three interrelated approaches:

- (a) that the scripture cited is scientifically credible;
- (b) is within the balanced framework of a biblical theology,  
and
- (c) performs effectively as a means of grace through its relationship to Jesus Christ the centre of all theological proposals.

In analysing Briggs' use of Scripture we shall consider his exegesis of passages related to Jesus Christ as the Son of God under three categories. First, his exposition of the Life of Jesus as an historical event. Second, his defence of the miraculous element in Jesus in particular the Virgin birth, Third, his handling of Scripture within a Biblical theology showing Jesus to be the fullfilment of the Messianic ideal.

(1) In Briggs' preface to his book "New Light on the Life of Jesus"<sup>1</sup> he describes his Theological pilgrimage which caused him to rethink the chronological

---

1. Briggs, C., 'New Light on the Life of Jesus', T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1904.

development of the ministry of Jesus. He had once, under Edward Robinson, been taught a harmony of the Gospels based on the chronological order of John, this under the influence of European Critical Scholarship he had abandoned as he began to apply

"the same rigorous methods of criticism to the New Testament that I had applied for many years to the Old Testament."<sup>1</sup>

Mark's chronology, also used as a basis for harmony was also rejected. While seeking to answer two questions, When did Jesus begin his ministry, and, Where was Jesus during the absence of the twelve? he discovered that there was a Galilean Ministry prior to the arrest of John the Baptist, and that while five pairs of the twelve were absent on the Mission in Galilee, Jesus with James and John, one pair of the twelve, was carrying on his ministry in Jerusalem, and at intervals with another pair, Thomas and Matthew, in Peraea : and so, for Briggs, the order of the ministry became altogether different from that presupposed in their popular harmonies and lives of Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

Briggs is convinced of the validity of his thesis for three reasons:

- (i) It is in keeping with the ancient harmonist Tatian.
- (ii) the consequences of Briggs arrangement is that the materials of the Gospel take their place

"with so much ease, so much propriety, and with such simplicity and beautiful harmony."<sup>3</sup>

---

1. Ibid., p.viii  
 2. Ibid., p.ix.  
 3. Ibid., p.x.

- (iii) It removes the chasm between the synoptics and the Gospel of John and satisfies the searching enquiries of modern criticism.

The manner of his using Scripture is seen in the chapter - When did Jesus begin his ministry?

The problem Briggs discusses is the differing statements of the Gospels. (Cf. Mark 1:14,15 ; Matt. 4:12-17 ; Luke 4:14,15 and John 4:1-3) as to when Jesus began his ministry. Matthew and Mark seem to date the beginning of the Galilean ministry subsequent to the arrest of John the Baptist. Luke does not, while John asserts a ministry in Galilee prior to that event.

The two traditional ways of handling this problem ~~was~~ either to regard John as unhistorical, build on the statement of Mark and ignore the silence of Luke or accept the historicity of John that there was an earlier Galilean ministry but to put all the synoptic material subsequent to the arrest of John the Baptist.

This for Briggs creates even more problems. He prefers to build on the statement of Luke, put much of the synoptic material before the arrest of John including a considerable amount of material given by Mark as happening subsequent to John's arrest.

What then is the relationship between the statement of Luke and that of Mark. He considers four possible explanations.

The statement of Mark, in its present form, was before Luke and he either:



- (1) rejected it as unhistorical, or
- (2) interpreted it as not referring to the real beginning of the Galilean ministry.
- (3) Having related the arrest of John he saw no reason to refer to it again here.
- (4) The statement of Mark in its present form is not that of the original Mark which Luke used, but the reference to the Baptist is one of the additions made to the primitive Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

Briggs' consideration of this is under six categories:

- A. All critics recognise that some material was added to Mark. There is no evidence that either Luke or John were familiar with the statement of our present Mark re. when Jesus began his ministry. It is unlikely that Matthew built on the present text of Mark since the statement is changed from a fact, to the hearing about it. Briggs demonstrates that 'the Gospel of God' and 'believe in the gospel' are additions to the original Mark and surmises that there is no reason why 'after that John was delivered up' is not also an addition.
- B. If this were in the original why would the historian Luke destroy its historical importance by omitting it here and giving the arrest of John and topical order in the previous chapter?
- C. The statement of Mark can be understood as saying that Jesus went into Galilee preaching the same message as John the Baptist. It does not teach or imply that he did not teach or work miracles before this time.

---

1. Ibid., p.5.

The Gospels are not written for the purposes of strict chronology but with topicality in view and therefore even incidents recorded in Mark after the arrest of John may have happened earlier.

D. The statement of Matthew : "From that time, began Jesus to preach, and to say Repent ye; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand", emphasises a real beginning but does not exclude the possibility of distinguishing between the ministry of preaching the Kingdom and an earlier ministry of teaching and miracle working where he was still in the shadow of John the Baptist.

E. The story of Luke is intrinsically most probable. After Jesus baptism he goes into the wilderness, returns to Galilee and stops at the Jordan to revisit the one who had baptised him. Disciples are transferred etc.

F. The material of the Galilean ministry given by the Synoptics subsequent to the statements considered above can be incorporated chronologically prior to the arrest of John the Baptist. In so far as Luke places the rejection of Jesus in Nazareth early in his Gospel for topical reasons but took place later as intimated by Matthew and Mark, there is no reason why events recorded for topical reasons later in Matthew and Mark should not be placed earlier in the chronological outline of the Life of Jesus.

Briggs concludes from this, that the first meeting of Jesus with the Baptist was due to his journey from Galilee to Jerusalem to keep the feast of Tabernacles and that it was on his return that he went alone to be baptised by John in the Jordan. Stage one of Jesus' ministry was

therefore between Tabernacles and Passover and this first Passover is the boundary line between the preparatory work of the Baptist and the ministry of Jesus.

"The work of Jesus up to this time was a preparatory work under the shadow of the Baptist, and therefore not considered by Mark and his authority, St. Peter, as the real beginning of the ministry of Jesus."<sup>1</sup>

(2) Briggs would seek to affirm not only the historicity of Jesus but his miraculous virgin birth.<sup>2</sup> Briggs recognises, that the Apostle Paul, although firm in his belief in the divinity of Christ and the Incarnation, makes no mention of the virgin birth; That John 1:13, although having an ancient reading in favour of the virgin birth, cannot support such a view because the external evidences of Greek codices and versions are overwhelmingly against it ; and the Hebrews and Revelation where the Lordship of Christ is emphasised, the virgin birth is strikingly absent. Only in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, he contends, is there any reference to it.

Turning to the Synoptics, Briggs considers three possible grounds for objection to the virgin birth.

(1) "In both Luke and Matthew he is said to be the 'Son of Joseph'." To this Briggs replies that this is true legally and as he was acknowledged by the people. However such a title is given to him only after the virgin birth had been stated.

---

1. Ibid., p.16.

2. Briggs, C., 'The Virgin Birth of Our Lord', American Journal of Theology, Vol.12, 1908.



(ii) "The old Syriac reading of Matt. 1:16 is 'Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the virgin, begat Jesus called the Messiah'." 'Begat' says Briggs is here used legally because the genealogy of Matthew was based on Chronicles and gives an official line.

(iii) 'Mark was silent on the virgin birth to avoid early controversy in Christianity'. Briggs does not question this but argues that as with Paul, this does not deny the virgin birth.

"The virgin birth does however rest upon the authority of two of the Holy Gospels, and that authority must be regarded as sufficient for those who<sub>1</sub> recognise their divine inspiration."<sup>1</sup>

Briggs observes that at one time the virgin birth was believed to be a myth which grew up in the Apostolic community and was eventually tacked on to the Gospels. However, Briggs seeks to use the tools of Biblical Criticism to refute the charge of myth.

Biblical criticism can demonstrate the following:

- (i) that the witness to the virgin birth came from the hands of Matthew and Luke.
- (ii) that their composition was based on older sources.
- (iii) that the earliest sources of Christian documents the logia Matthew has references to the virgin birth.
- (iv) that the references found in poetry are of Hebrew origin and translated into Greek.
- (v) that Luke almost certainly consulted with the family of Jesus and therefore the virgin birth has the immediate sanction of his family.

---

1. Ibid., p.193.

- (vi) that myths like this in other religions are quite different. Here conception is said to be by the Holy Spirit.
- (vii) that Mary would have kept quiet about the virgin birth for fear of being laughed at until she was certain he was the Messiah. The virgin birth of Jesus was therefore made public about the time we would expect.

"We may therefore say with the utmost confidence : there is no valid reason, so far as biblical or historic criticism is concerned, to doubt the doctrinal fact of the virgin birth."<sup>1</sup>

- (3) As already indicated Briggs believed that the Scriptures used in the context of the development of a Biblical Theology revealed their efficacy most clearly. This can be seen in his understanding of Christ and the Messianic ideal.<sup>2</sup>

Briggs' starting point is the nature of prophecy in general and Messianic prophecy in particular.

He sees prophecy as a form of religious instruction found in all religions. In primitive religions prophets are interpreters of nature since nature is divine. Necromancy, the seeking of counsel from the departed was a popular form as was dreams and their interpretation. Occasionally a person would lose consciousness of the external world in an ecstatic state and was said to be under the influence of the supernatural. All these forms of prophecy, Briggs believes, God has used and illustrates from incidents in the Old Testament. It is however in Theopany or Christophany,

---

1. Ibid., p.192.

2. Briggs, C.A., The Messianic Ideal, lecture delivered at Wellesly College, Oberlin College, and before the American Institute of Sacred Literature, Chicago, printed in Bible, Church and Reason, op.cit., pp.177-201.



in a personal contact with God which marks the highest order of prophecy, e.g. Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve Apostles and Paul.

"The prophet of God is assured by the personal presence of God in Theophany or by the conscious presence of the divine Spirit within him, that he is commissioned to declare the truth of God which he sees and conceives."<sup>1</sup>

These prophets in giving instruction spoke for their generation. He is, nevertheless, seen to have a role with respect to the future.

"He bears a commission from God who sees the end from the beginning, and who gives instruction in every period with a view to train those who receive it for the ultimate end to which he is leading all the generations of mankind."<sup>2</sup>

This education will be completed in the day of Jahweh when the Messiah will establish a Kingdom of Glory in which all history will come to fruition:

"Messianic prophecy is therefore the crown of all its religious instruction."<sup>3</sup>

Briggs would seek to avoid a too narrow view of Old Testament prophecy which looked for the fulfillment of minute details. He wants to paint on a broader canvas within which the advent of the Kingdom can be observed.

---

1. Ibid., p.181.

2. Ibid., p.181.

3. Ibid., p.182.



There are eight motifs which Briggs traces as elements in this Messianic ideal:

(1) The Ideal of Mankind at Creation

This he believes to be the most comprehensive. Man at creation is created as Lord over nature which requires the divine image, communion with God and moral perfection. This ideal is forfeited by sin but is regained by grace. He quotes from the Psalms and the prophets pointing to the ideal where man is exalted to dominion over all creatures. In the New Testament, Christ as the son of Man, the second Adam, the perfect man, the conqueror and enthroned Lord shows his realisation of the ideal : The progress in the world is therefore the external preparation for worldwide ethical and religious advance.

(2) The Woman's Seed

This is from the promise of victory to the woman's seed over that of the serpent. Good and evil is seen under two heads and scattered seeds. The history of redemption is then the history of the removal of a chosen seed from the masses in which it is enveloped i.e. in the election of grace - Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Kingdom of Judah and a remnant. The appearance of the suffering victor is a messiah unacceptable to the Jews. The Church will share in the triumph of the Lord, the woman's seed.<sup>1</sup>

(3) The Advent of God

This is from the dying vision of Noah where he sees his descendants struggling in the history of the world but finds blessing in the advent of God to dwell in the tents of Shem.

---

1. Rom. 8:20 ; Rom 20:10.

The story of the nations is the rising and falling of Babylon, Egypt, Canaan, Phoenicia, Carthage, Persia, Greece and Rome. All recount the unholy ambitions of Ham and successors of Japhet. They became the framework of the story of blessedness that is involved in the advent of God to the tents of Shem. Shem is the bearer of the true religion - the high priest of mankind. The Covenants with Abraham and Israel, with David and Jesus are blessings from the hands of God dwelling in the tents of Shem.

The permanent Theophany is the SheKinah Glory of the Tabernacle and Temple. Canaan becomes the land of God, Jerusalem the City of God, the Temple the palace of God. The prophets speak of the superiority of the New Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup>

When Christ appears he heads for Jerusalem to cleanse the Temple so that in the Incarnation the Messianic prediction of Noah's blessing finds its realisation.<sup>2</sup>

#### (4) The Blessing of Abraham

In the Covenant with Abraham, Briggs underlines the three lines of Messianic prophecy. The Land of Blessing points to the Temple of Humanity, the seed to the prophet for humanity, the blessing to the nations is for the human race. The Holy City becomes the New Jerusalem, the True Israel (the seed of Abraham) are found in Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup> The New Israel becomes the blessing to the nations.

#### (5) The Kingdom of Priests

The Covenant at Horeb constituted Israel a Kingdom of priests, a holy nation in the world. As priests their

---

1. Jer. 3:17, Zech. 14:20-21, Mic. 4:1.

2. Eph. 2:20-22, Rev. 21:2ff.

3. Gal. 3:7, Rom 11:17-25.

chief aim was not to destroy but to save. Jesus' emphasis was just this that Glory must be preceded by grace. Israel, like Jonah, wanted the destruction of enemies. Jesus taught his disciples the nature of priestly service so that Peter sees the Sinaitic calling in the ministry of the Christian Church.<sup>1</sup>

#### (6) The Prophet Greater than Moses

Moses predicted one greater than himself who will complete the divine revelation. Until Jesus appears none of the prophets were comparable to Moses, but Jesus is greater. He was superior in his words of religious instruction, in prediction of the future and in that he not only bore with him the presence of the Holy Spirit but bestowed it and made the Church prophetic.

#### (7) The Messianic King

This prediction begins with the prophet Nathan who speaks of a King who will erect the house of Yahweh. He will be the Son of God, will bear stripes of punishment and be the bearer of divine grace, e.g.<sup>2</sup> This King knows no defeat and gives peace, righteousness and joy to the world. The reigns of David and Solomon gave ideals which rise above historical reality but the Monarchs of the Davidic dynasty did not rise to it. It is through Hezekiah and Josiah that the prophets and psalmists are encouraged to fill out the details. Certain definite predictions then emerge - He is to be the Son of David. He will be born in Bethlehem. He must come forth from obscurity. He will be a warrior, a conqueror of nations and will achieve universal

---

1. Pet. 2:9.

2. Ps.11, Ps.60, Ps.95.



peace. All this, says Briggs, is fulfilled in Jesus Christ who is reigning over a Kingdom of grace.<sup>1</sup>

(8) The Day of Jahweh

This is a day of grace<sup>2</sup> and a day of judgment.<sup>3</sup>

It is depicted in Scripture by the heaping up of figures of speech that are not always congruous and which when taken together and regarded as realistic are grotesque and extravagantly impossible, but which all the more set forth that deis irae that transcends human conception and imagination.<sup>4</sup> There are the images of Fire,<sup>5</sup> of Battle,<sup>6</sup> of Harvest.<sup>7</sup>

This day of grace and redemption embraces the whole Messianic age culminating in the second Advent.

Briggs recognises that he has brought together what are apart in the Old Testament. He believes that many of these ideals converge in the Messiah at the first Advent. All of them centre in Messiah in the second Advent which is the great hope of the Church and the World. All prophecy points to this goal. All history unfolds towards this climax.

"The Messiah is the centre of the Bible. The Messiah is the centre of history. The Messiah is the Lord of nature. The Messiah is the Saviour of the world. The Messiah is our own Redeemer, our hope and joy, our crown and our everlasting life."<sup>8</sup>

---

1. 1 Cor. 15:24.

2. Joel 4:18-21.

3. Is. 34:4.

4. Ibid., p.199

5. Ez. 38:22, Matt. 13:42, Dan. 7:9-12.

6. Rev. 20:10, Joel 4:18-22, Is. 34:3, Ez. 38;39, Rev. 19:14.

7. Matt. 13:30, Joel 4:13, Rev. 14:17-20.

8. Ibid., p.201.

What is involved then in the use of infallible Scriptures in the course of Briggs' theological arguments? This can be stated very briefly. Briggs view of Biblical infallibility does not hinder him use the full range of scientific exegesis whatever conclusions it may lead one to regarding the inaccuracy historically, geographically, etc. of the Biblical narrative. It does not prevent a radical reappraisal as to how the Bible was written in terms of compilation of sources and tradition. The full repertoire including the results of scientific criticism are not questioned 'in principle', if they are thought to bring under judgment the Scripture, provided there is not an overtly anti-supernatural and rationalistic bias. In so far as the Bible is infallible for Briggs with regard to its purpose in terms of man's faith and morality, it is only in the process of Biblical Theologising with its practical and spiritual impact that the constraints and controls of an infallible book are seen to be at work. This is evident in his perceiving and indicating a Christ-centred unity in diversity, in that it is through Christ that we have infallible certainty. But more than this; the Scriptures which in practice, through Biblical Theology, are a means of grace cause him to use the other exegetical tools in anticipation of reaching the zenith of the pyramid. The infallible rule although not coercing him into inerrant expectations of the Bible, nevertheless colours his exegesis like all presuppositions whether existential or epistemological. He will e.g. not hesitate to rewrite the chronology of Mark in that it does not affect the historicity of Jesus but he will not question the virgin birth of Jesus, even to the doubting of the validity of the inductive method, in that the denial of the virgin birth might disturb the infallible certainty which the Messiah brings.



"The modern mind uses by preference the inductive method. I have used this method all my professional life, as much probably as anyone else in the field of Holy Scripture and theology. But it is not the only method. All legitimate methods should be used for the discovery and verification of truth and fact . . . We cannot limit our knowledge, especially in Theology to what induction gives us. We can never know God save very inadequately by the inductive method."<sup>1</sup>

C.      The Logic of Briggs Argument and the Unfallible Scriptures

Already, using the type of argument found in Stephen Toulmin's work, Warfield's logic has been highlighted. On the same basis (see p.193) Briggs line of reasoning can be set out as follows with the same recognition of being over-simplistic in stating his position.

---

1. Briggs, C., 'The Virgin Birth of Our Lord', op.cit., p.209.



P.

The Bible is infallible

Since W.

The Bible is 'the Word of God' and brings us to 'religious certainty'

on account of B.

1. The Holy Spirit speaks to us in 'the Bible' and brings us to religious certainty
2. Only that which is infallible is certain
3. The Holy Spirit uses those passages which speak plainly of life and salvation
4. 'The Content' of such passages which progressively focus on Jesus Christ and not the form is the means of grace
5. For this purpose in the economy of God the Scriptures have been plenary inspired
6. The Holy Spirit's work is not dependent upon the original autographs but uses extant manuscripts and modern translations
7. This is the Church doctrine
8. On this basis the Canon of Scripture can be explained
9. This view is not in conflict with the discoveries of modern science re. the Bible

Q.

Presumably

Unless R.

The Bible is not errorless

1. Form and content (thoughts and words) cannot be separated
2. The Bible is not subject to the same criticism as any other book
3. The inductive methodology in examining the phenomena of Scripture is to be subject to what may be deduced from the teaching of Scripture
4. 'Error' be so defined as to exclude it by definition from the Bible
5. The discoveries made from the scientific method conflict with the historic Church doctrine

## CONCLUSIONS

The method employed in this thesis is essentially descriptive. Whatever the merits or demerits of a Wittgensteinian approach its emphasis is upon listening and allowing the advocates to speak freely. The issues before us raised by the nineteenth century debate on Biblical infallibility have theological implications for the Church to-day but our interest is not to question the validity or otherwise of the stances taken by the two protagonists (Warfield and Briggs). Our aim, is non-judgmental description of the 'usage' of the term infallible in the concrete situation in which their theological reflection and exposition takes place. We are not concerned to analyse abstractly the relationship of the language used to reality nor to consider how the statements of the respective theologians correspond to empirical data. The goal in view is clarity. The intent is therefore to be, as far as possible, a non-partisan spectator of the 'life-situations' in which the language-games of these theologians are performed. There is only one qualification that ought to be made. Since we are concerned with the fact of their profound disagreement with regard to the nature and function of Holy Scripture, in spite of using the same appellation 'infallible', there are underlying questions as to why? Such questions cannot but effect the selection of material and the structure of the exposition. Nevertheless as is evident in the amount of primary source material quoted, the aim is, as far as possible, to allow the theologian to speak for himself within the categories that he has chosen.



From the outset two queries as to the feasibility of this method were considered. To these we now return in order to clarify and assess what we are about.

The first, is the imprecision, even vagueness of Wittgenstein as to how one might investigate philosophically and distinguish clearly the functions of usage in complex human speech. If one accepts that what Wittgenstein is attempting is not an exhaustive theory whereby one can differentiate by application the various linguistic and non-linguistic activities in life-situations, then his insights can be applied with a degree of flexibility. What he offers is a technique to help one examine the use of words. It is not a full blown theory or definition of language. There is therefore in our analysis no mechanical application of Wittgenstein's thought. There is rather, under the headings which emerge from his investigations a discussion which throws some light on theological disagreement.

The second is much more difficult to cope with. Are the demands of Wittgenstein too great to make analysis on his basis impractical. In comparison to a grammatical or philosophical study the expectations are enormous. But what are these expectations? Is it necessary to have an exhaustive and detailed account of the meaning of the word 'infallible' as used by Briggs and Warfield in order to demonstrate the reasons for their disagreement. If so, then what is required is an absolutely exhaustive and accurate account, the speakers world, his whims, desires, cares and so on.<sup>1</sup> If it is necessary to know in detail the situations in which 'infallible' was learnt and taught;

---

1. cf. Paul Holmer (see p.34).



to know comprehensively the innumerable situations in which 'infallible' will be found to be appropriate or abundantly justified, then the limitations of knowledge and the inability to perceive exhaustively, will make any application of such demands impractical or any claimed conclusions inaccurate. The expectations of this thesis are less stringent. On the basis that theological conflict, according to our gleanings from Wittgenstein, is caused by specific differences in functional usage; we have sought to descriptively analyse the theologians in question under the categories which would expose, e.g. Semantic Speech-Act and Speech-Activity usage. We have sought to assemble sufficient, if not exhaustive, material to explain the reasons for their theological disagreement.

Even on a cursory reading of the writings of Warfield and Briggs, two possible grounds for disagreement can be discounted. The first is that there is a conflict between a believer and an unbeliever. Ironically, Warfield's argument for the infallibility of Scripture is heavily dependent upon empirical evidence but his affirmation of equating infallibility with inerrancy is not subject to empirical refutation. While, Briggs' argument for the infallibility of Scripture is based on the non-empirical witness of the Holy Spirit, but will not equate infallibility with inerrancy because of the empirical evidence to the contrary. If by inference from Wittgenstein's discussion on 'The Last Judgment' an unbeliever's<sup>1</sup> convictions and affirmations are based on essentially empirical evidence, then this is an argument between believers. The second is that there is confusion between surface grammar and depth grammar when the term 'infallible' is used. Surface grammar concerns the use of a word in the

---

1. See p.17

construction of a sentence. Depth grammar concerns the purpose of the word in the form of life in which it plays a part. The possibility of such confusion can be set aside for two reasons

- (a) Both Briggs and Warfield use the term consistently in the same grammatical manner, e.g. in their ordination vows they both subscribed to the statement:

"I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice".

Here, and in other references throughout their writings 'infallible' or 'infallibility' is grammatically presented as being a perfection or attribute of Holy Scripture

- (b) In the course of the debates between Briggs and Warfield it is assumed and accepted that each are using the term 'infallible' in the same way grammatically. There is therefore no confusion between surface and depth grammar

The three areas where disagreement between Briggs and Warfield will be focused is that of Semantic, speech-act and speech-activity usage of the word 'infallible'. The differences as to the nature of Knowledge in general and the Knowledge of God in particular with regard to the uniqueness of language used in religion and theology will then be discussed.



### SEMANTIC USAGE

By this is meant that when the word 'infallibility' or 'infallible' is used it is in the context of certain semantic conditions, i.e. both Warfield and Briggs will use the term when they are in a certain kind of situation. This is to recognise that there are semantic regularities associated with the word 'infallible' or 'infallibility' with regard to the Bible as used by these two theologians. Since these semantic regularities differ for the men in question; it has been necessary for us to look comprehensively, although not exhaustively at the circumstances in which each uses the word.

Here we will draw upon what has been expounded in detail in the thesis and summarise in order to demonstrate the difference in semantic usage. We shall do this under three headings:

1. The place of the infallible Bible within their view of Knowledge and Authority
2. What they consider the infallible Bible to be
3. How they use an infallible Bible

1. The Place of the infallible Bible within their view of Knowledge and Authority

### WARFIELD

From Augustine and Scottish realist philosophy, Warfield recognised that by intuition one apprehended the reliability of sense experience, the objectivity and reality of the world we experience and the primacy of the intellect. This for him was self-evident. Similarly, in



our apprehension of God, we intuitively have a sense of dependence and of the divine. This seed of religion originates<sup>1</sup> for Warfield, not in the senses, but in the intelligible world. The intellect therefore gives knowledge of God to the heart. In order that the intellect might be enlightened further, authoritative revelation from God is required. This objective and external authority because it is addressed to the intellect must be 'reasonable' and accredited through evidence. It must also authenticate itself by being in accord with what is already known through intuition and by evoking fiducia (trust) from the heart as well as the mind.

The moral and spiritual rebellion of man results in man being unable to respond positively either through intuition or to the revelation. The response of God, according to Warfield is both objective and subjective. Objectively, God has intervened in history and progressively more clearly revealed himself climaxing in Jesus Christ. God's objective and expressed interpretation of what he is doing is 'the Bible' - (what he has breathed out). It is addressed to man and is reasonable to the intellect with indicia giving evidences for acceptance. Subjectively, in order that man might receive what God is saying, the Holy Spirit must deal with the moral and spiritual hostility of man to God in order that man cannot but recognise and receive the revelation of God which is the Bible.

The term 'infallible' with regard to the Bible is used by Warfield to refer to a book which is objectively authoritative in what it says to the intellect. To convince the intellect that this revelation is consistent with what is intuitively perceived of God, it must be

'infallible' otherwise it would not be the objective, authoritative Word of a God who cannot mislead us concerning the truth.

### BRIGGS

From the new period in Biblical Criticism in the nineteenth century and in particular from German scholarship, Schleiermacher and William Robertson Smith; Charles Briggs developed a view of Knowledge and Authority which was dualistic. We stated it like this. For Briggs there are two types of Knowledge. The first is empirical; it can lead to probability; it makes one critical and the result is always fallible. The second is theological; it leads to certainty; it produces obedience and is always infallible. Briggs does not attempt to epistemologically unite these two. He assumes that the first does not require elaboration or discussion. Only the second he seeks to defend.

Briggs recognises that the revelation of God must address the Reason of man if it is to be received. But for Briggs 'The Reason' is not the intellectual faculty, it rather embraces the metaphysical categories; the conscience and the religious feeling. This Reason must be brought to certainty, if our response is to be positive and obedient. The revelation of God in its address to the Reason is not confined to the Bible. The eternal logos, immediately acts in authority on the reason of all men. It is possible therefore to be constrained by such a revelation apart from the Bible. When we are brought to such certainty in our reason, the revelation is infallible and we must obey, e.g. the categorical imperative. Such authority he sees not as an infallible rule because it does not establish a universal principle.



it is nevertheless infallible because it is an authority which the reason cannot but accept.

The Bible is infallible for Briggs, not because it can be objectively demonstrated to be the authoritative revelation of God but because God by the Holy Spirit directly and immediately addresses the reason of the believer, and gives him certainty of conviction which he must obey. What the Holy Spirit uses to address man is not the whole Bible and everything in the Bible. Biblical theology which focuses on the logos, the promised Messiah, highlights the spheres in the Scriptures in which we hear the Holy Spirit speaking. They are areas like doctrines of universal significance which concern human salvation or practical matters relating to them. When God speaks to us infallibly in the Bible it is in the substance of what is said and not the form of words in which it is encased.

The term 'infallible' with regard to the Bible is used by Briggs to refer to a book, which when it is used by God to speak to 'the Reason' does so with such authority as to evoke assurance and certainty in the believer. Only infallible authority has this effect. The Bible is therefore infallible.

2. What they consider the infallible Bible to be:

According to Warfield, God has been constantly disclosing or revealing his nature and purpose, either through the creation or in a special way. These are interdependent. It is because of man's moral rebellion the emphasis lies on 'special' revelation. It is 'special' in that it is outwith the natural process of man's



knowing. This has in the historical development of man been given progressively and reaches its climax in Jesus Christ so that God's special revelation is both redemptive and revelatory. Part of this revelation activity, is called by Warfield concursive operation. It employs the total personality of the one chosen to be the organ of revelation. God by the Holy Spirit, superintends, directs and controls the operation so that what is revealed is according to his choosing. God's revelation as intended is secured. Warfield sees the Bible as coming into being as part of this revelational/redemptive work of God through concursive operation. The Bible being what has been revealed by God, is therefore his Word. He supports his contention by showing that for Jesus and the Apostles what their Bible said, God said ; that the Scriptures had been produced by the breath of God ; that this was the uniform testimony of the Church and that such a view of the Bible satisfied the witness of God in our hearts.

This concursive operation results in a book which is both divine and human. Every word is at once divine and human. The Bible is the product of man's thought and reflection but because of God's organic superintendence in overruling all things the humanity which is evident does not in any way distort the pure Word of God.

Where we find therefore in the Bible what is apparently 'fallible', it is because the copies we possess are in error, or our knowledge is incomplete re. the subject under discussion. What the Scriptures affirm in accordance with the intent of the author corresponds to the truth. The Bible is therefore a divine-human book which through the inspiration of God has been preserved from fallibility and is therefore to be received as the infallible Word of God.

According to Briggs, the revelation of God is not something to be considered apart from the immediate sense of certainty and assurance that it is God speaking in the 'Reason' of man. When the Bible is read and heard, God does in fact speak and reveal himself to men. He does so because of what he is revealing which is necessary for man to hear concerning salvation. Briggs draws together these elements under the heading of Biblical Theology. He sees the Holy Spirit speaking in those passages which emphasise the religion, faith and ethics necessary for man and in particular their unity in the unifying dimension of the Messiah. God does address man with Lordly authority in these areas. When the reader approaches the Bible with attention, seeking to appropriate the truth to his/her life and faith is being exercised God speaks to 'the Reason' of man and the Bible is therefore a means of grace. For this purpose the Scriptures have been 'inspired' by God not in the sense of providential care and superintendence but in filling the Scriptures with a rule of faith and practice which pervades all of it. It is a work of God in the lives of men making their writings Holy Scripture. This inspiration does not cover the external letter but the message that is conveyed, guaranteeing it truthfulness, reliability and authority. The unessential and unnecessary in the Bible and the imperfection of the form in which the substance is conveyed are all evidences of human fallibility. They do not deny the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible because such are irrelevant to the Bible as a means of grace whereby through the Testimonium Spiritus Sancti we hear the certain voice of God. Only such a view of Scripture, says Briggs, can bring us to the assurance of faith. This he argues, is consistent with the testimony of the Church universal. It does not leave out faith at the mercy of historical



and literary criticism. The Bible, therefore for Briggs, contains the Word of God, the message in which the Holy Spirit speaks to 'the Reason' of the believer. It is therefore, because of what it accomplishes, infallible.

### 3. How they use an infallible Bible

For Warfield, the starting point in using the Scriptures is, that the weight of evidence is such, that we are to approach the Bible with the presumption that it is free from error. There is the metaphysical possibility of his being mistaken but he will not allow his use of Scripture to be governed by a comprehensive inductive method where the teaching of the Bible and the phenomena of the Bible are co-factors. The weight of evidence for his view of the Bible he considers to be so great that the phenomena must be examined in the light of it. Although welcoming to the advances in scientific scholarship re. the Bible in the nineteenth century and being willing to use their techniques himself in the developing skills of textual criticism; his views demand a restraint upon this method. He would argue that the method must be controlled by the data and to have an anti-supernatural bias which many of the practitioners had was to impose upon the evidence their prejudices. He is convinced that the Scriptures can only be explained on the basis of their authenticity. He is therefore willing in examining a human (as well as divine) book to allow his logical deductions, his recognitions of tensions in meaning and emphasis, and his use of the grammatico-historical method freedom of exegesis. It is assumed, however, that the infallible scriptures are harmonious, accurate and consistent in what they affirm. Apologetically, exegetically and devotionally, Warfield's use of the infallible Scriptures can be stated like this:



In so far as the evidence considered apart from anti-supernatural bias points to the Bible as the infallible Word of God, then we are to use the Bible and the factors or evidence which might apparently contradict this in the light of what we know.

For Briggs, the human book, (the Bible), contains the Divine (the Word of God). It is therefore inevitable that in the form there will appear in peripheral and secondary matters inadvertent error. These must be recognised as the product of the inductive method untrammelled by dogma or scholasticism. In so far as all truth has its origin in God, Briggs is convinced that if this scientific method is appropriate it must be used without dogmatic restraint in spite of the dreaded possibility of the conclusions being in conflict with the authority of Scripture. That such an approach exposes 'errors' is no difficulty for Briggs for they do not apparently conflict with the substance of what is to be believed.

The whole range of scientific criticism can be used in handling the Scriptures to determine the integrity, authenticity, literary forms and credibility of Scripture.

Over and against the rationalists and the dogmatists, as an evangelical, Briggs believes his use of Scripture which majors on Biblical Theology enables the infallible authority of Scripture to become perspicuous. Biblical Theology is the summit of the scientific approach to the Bible. It is this which causes one to see Christ as the central focal point of the Bible and therefore may be used as 'a means of grace'. It is within this Biblical Theology that through the witness of the Holy Spirit the infallible authority of Scripture can be discerned.

In this summary of the differences in semantic usage there is the danger of failing to allow each of the theologians to make their necessary and desired qualifications. Nevertheless the differences and the reasons for theological disagreement and as to why they apparently argue at cross purposes begins to surface.

Warfield is functioning within epistemological monism where there is some attempt to correlate the knowledge of God with knowledge in general. The revelation of God which makes such knowledge of God possible is conceived objectively. Its appropriation is not necessarily part of that revelation. The Bible as an objective revelation of God is therefore infallible.

Briggs functions within epistemological dualism. The knowledge of God is in a separate category from knowledge in general. The revelation of God which makes the knowledge of God possible is not conceived of apart from the positive response of recognition. Only when there is the response of certainty and assurance of God may one speak of Authority. This authority must be infallible. God speaks with such authority in the Bible. The Bible is therefore infallible.

Warfield considers the Bible objectively to be the Word of God insofar as it has been inspired by God. There is therefore a direct identification between the Bible and the Word of God. The Word of God is infallible and therefore the Bible is infallible.

Briggs considers the Bible as that which God uses to speak his Word. It has been inspired so as to contain the message which God desires to convey as an infallible rule of faith and practice. When the Holy

Spirit speaks through this message he does so infallibly. There is no close correlation between the Bible and the Word of God but when God accomplishes his purpose by speaking his Word in the Bible it is infallible.

Warfield sees the Bible in its entirety to be that which has been produced by the superintendence of God. This overall work of God means that it is infallible in its humanity, because the form and substance cannot be divorced. What the Bible claims to be and what the evidence authenticates must therefore determine our manner in handling the 'infallible' Bible, i.e. it will not mislead us nor err concerning what it affirms.

Briggs sees the Bible as a human book which contains the Divine Word. It is therefore fallible in its humanity and infallible only when it speaks God's Word. The form and substance can be divorced. Every method appropriate to the humanity is therefore appropriate in our handling of the Bible in spite of the dangers of the phenomena bringing into question the substance of the faith which the Holy Spirit has spoken infallibly.



### SPEECH-ACT USAGE

It is generally recognised that Wittgenstein did not appeal to the speech-act aspect of the use of words. His primary interest was in the speech-activity use of language which is related to language-games and will be considered later. It was J.L. Austin, although of the same school as Wittgenstein, but not a disciple, who analysed this aspect of language-usage. We shall use his categories to help shed some light as to what Briggs and Warfield are doing when they speak of an infallible Bible.

Initially in his thought Austin distinguished between utterances which were 'constative' and could be called true or false and utterances which were 'performative', i.e. they performed an act, e.g. 'I name this ship Queen Elizabeth'. Using this distinction how would one classify the ordination vows of Briggs and Warfield.

"I believe the Scriptures of the  
Old and New Testaments to be the  
only infallible rule of faith  
and practice."

According to Austin's early classification this could be a performative utterance. It is in the present indicative tense which although not necessary for performatives, is common. It takes place in the context of a ceremony whereby by stating these words the speaker is involved in accomplishing an event, i.e. his ordination. It also conforms to the 6 rules outlined by Austin as being necessary for a 'happy' functioning of a performative.

- "(A.1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,
- (A.2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
- (B.1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and
- (B.2) completely
- (I.1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further
- (I.2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently."<sup>1</sup>

Unquestionably the grounds of Briggs' heresy trial and the underlying tension between Warfield and Briggs was that Briggs had broken one or more of these rules of performance and was denying his ordination vows. The difficulty in following this line of argument is that, apart from Briggs believing that he did not break the rules, the actual debate centres on the constative aspect of what

---

1. Austin, J.L., How to do Things with Words, Oxford, U.P., 1976, pp.14-15.

was affirmed at ordination. What happens is admitted by Austin, namely the constative collapses into the performative. In Lecture XI, Austin demonstrates that the performative and constative are at times so interwoven in terms of how they may be classified that he abandons this distinction for what he calls 'a theory of illocutionary forces'.

For our purposes we summarise it as follows. Apart from making noises (a phonetic act) and conforming to grammatical sense (a phatic act), Austin recognises three kinds of acts we perform when we say something. (I will use the language under debate between Briggs and Warfield to illustrate how each might be used).

First, the locutionary act of using an utterance with more or less definite sense and reference, for example, saying 'The Bible is infallible'. (It is not being suggested at this stage that this is of the same nature as saying 'The Bible is open'. Since both Briggs and Warfield would make this statement we are using it as a lead to discover where their speech-act usage differs).

Second, the illocutionary act, which is the act I may perform in performing the locutionary act, i.e. in saying 'The Bible is infallible', I may be performing an illocutionary act of promising or stating or exclaiming.

Third, the perlocutionary act, is the act I may succeed in performing by means of my illocutionary act, e.g., by performing the illocutionary act of promising (in the context of a vow) I may succeed in performing the perlocutionary act of you ordaining me as a minister of the Presbyterian Church.



Before discussing the possible application of Austin's insights for the theological conflict between Warfield and Briggs some further helpful classifications can be made. Austin further distinguishes these performative acts, according to their illocutionary force under five headings:

- Verdictives - as when we acquit, assess or diagnose
- Exercitives - as when we appoint, demote, sentence or veto
- Commissives - as when we promise, bet, vow, adopt or consent
- Behavitives - as when we apologise, condole, curse or challenge
- Expositives - as when we affirm, deny, state, describe, report or testify.<sup>1</sup>

Two further qualifications must be made before assessing the speech-act usage of infallible in Warfield and Briggs. The first is that the word 'infallible' is used by these theologians as a description or attribute of the Bible. It does not perform a function in their use of language apart from this context. Second, the term 'infallible' re. the Bible is used by both theologians in circumstances with different illocutionary forces at work. There are at least four.

- (i) At ordination when vows and promises are made and taken
- (ii) In theological argument in either spoken or written form

---

1. Austin, Ibid., p.151f.

- (iii) In rhetoric during debate on the floor of the General Assembly or in their writings
- (iv) In worship, during 'preaching' or 'confession of faith'.

Each shall be considered in turn.

(i) Ordination Vows

Both Warfield and Briggs affirmed their belief in the infallibility of Scripture at their ordination. Here commissive illocutionary forces are at work (according to Austin). These men are entering into a covenant agreement by which through affirming their belief in the infallibility of the Bible they are agreeing to the expectations of what is required of a teaching elder in Nineteenth Century American Presbyterianism. The perlocutionary act is that they are ordained through having entered into this verbal contract.

(ii) Theological Argument

The writings and speeches of Warfield and Briggs of a theological nature are full (as we have seen) of references to Biblical infallibility. Whether the statements be prefaced by affirm, believe, postulate, regard as, etc.<sup>1</sup> these have expositive illocutionary force, for in them there is the expounding of views or the conclusion of an argument. The perlocutionary act is the intellectual convincing of the reader or listener.

(iii) Rhetoric

Apart from their theological rationale, both Briggs and Warfield were sincerely conscious of their own

---

1. Austin, Ibid., pp.162-163.

and their listeners/religious convictions and their identification of the Bible with the Authority under which they met and from which they received their normative guidance. The expression of belief in the infallibility of the Bible over and against their opponent was therefore intended to evoke negative and positive responses among their hearers. Various illocutionary forces are at work here. Expositive, although not as important as in theological statement. The expression of powerful religious feelings in affirming Biblical infallibility rhetorically is behavitive in that it

"include(s) the notion of reaction to other people's behaviour and fortunes and of attitudes and expressions of attitudes to someone else's past conduct or imminent conduct."<sup>1</sup>

The rhetorical device of wooing the audience has with it the perlocutionary force of creating the desired approval or disapproval. The theologian under assault, in the Assembly, primarily Briggs, might well have used the expression commissively in the giving of his word to uphold the faith of his Church.

#### (iv) In Worship

In the preaching of the Bible or in the Confession of the preacher, because of the essentially religious nature of such activity, reference to Biblical infallibility by both Briggs and Warfield is again, as in Rhetoric, either expositive, behavitive or commissive. The focus is upon the perlocutionary act of response to the God who speaks in the Bible with such authority which the confession of Biblical infallibility is meant to arouse.

---

1. Ibid., p.160.



It is therefore evident that however Warfield and Briggs may differ on the locutionary use of 'infallible' differences in terms of the illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts of utterances involving the word infallible do not contribute to our understanding of their theological disagreement.

The locutionary act has more bearing on semantic-usage which we have considered and speech-activity usage which follows.

#### SPEECH-ACTIVITY USAGE

The difference between speech-activity usage and speech-act usage, is that in the latter words are used to do something and in the former in doing something. It is recognised that speech-activities are narrower than language-games as used by Wittgenstein, in that language-games would include some non-linguistic behaviour. We are seeking to focus upon 'the grammar' of the religious man without at the same time removing him from his 'form of life' in which he plays his language-games.

What then is the nature of the speech-activity in use when Warfield and Briggs use the concept infallible? Three points must be made from the outset. First, in all language-games (which includes speech-activity) there are players and spectators. The spectators learn the rules of the game by watching the players. Our first task is not to judge but to watch and listen, as Briggs and Warfield perform their games according to their rules. Second, these games are part of a 'form of life'. Wittgenstein would say they are so inseparably bound together that the language used is meaningless unless received in the 'life

situation'. We have been concerned therefore to discover the 'life-situations' of Warfield and Briggs. Third, it is recognised that the number of different language games is indefinite. The edges between what is or is not a particular language game become blurred. The inability to rightly classify is therefore not a failure to recognise differences. The 'form of life' within which Warfield and Briggs use the concept infallible is religious. This is self-evident. It can be further qualified as to being of a Christian and American Presbyterian variety. They are both men of pious convictions who would desire to exercise and articulate their faith within the Christian Church according to the patterns and traditions of the American Presbyterian Community. They were both educated in the Calvinist theology of the Westminster Confession of Faith. They both used the same Bible from which they read and preached. Their ritual in worship would have been essentially the same according to the Reformed pattern. They both sought to be under the authority of the government of their Church by elders. These external similarities conceal, however, considerable differences in their 'forms of life'.

The structure of this study has sought to demonstrate their contextual differences. They have been summarised under semantic usage.

The chronological narrative of when the various influences came to effect their picture of life is not as important as the recognition of their existence. Philosophically and theologically they followed different paths. They had different friends and mentors depending on their schools of learning and their susceptibility to change. They developed different views of God's relationship to the world epistemologically. They had



different views of how God revealed himself and was involved in redeeming the world. Our study has highlighted this.

The difficulties which emerge and which cause the removal of one (Briggs) from the playing field, is because different language games are developing with different rules on the same playing field because two divergent religious 'forms of life' are in conflict. One group of players is insistent that their 'form of life' be normative and that the language games be played according to their rules (Warfield). The others (Briggs) wants at least their 'games' to be tolerated during play with the possibility of them being integrated so that they can all play together. The different 'forms of life' nevertheless produce different language games and more specifically differences in speech-activity usage.

What speech-activity is taking place when Warfield says 'The Bible is infallible'? Before classifying it we must set out what is claimed:

1. Here is an assertive statement which predicates a certain quality of a book.
2. It is empirically verifiable but not empirically falsifiable.
3. It requires qualification (e.g. original autographs, etc).
4. It is affirmed in the context of existential involvement and religious devotion.



What speech-activity is taking place when Briggs says 'The Bible is infallible'? Again here is what is claimed:

1. It is both an assertive statement predicting a certain quality to the message of a book and at the same time making a non-assertive statement about what the book does.
2. The assertive emphasis is not empirically verifiable but (in principle) empirically falsifiable (e.g. The findings of science conflicting with the message of Jesus Christ). The non-assertive emphasis is neither empirically verifiable or falsifiable.
3. It requires qualification (e.g. content distinguished from form, or, the contemporaneous work of the Holy Spirit).
4. It is only possible to make such an affirmation where there is existential involvement and religious devotion.

However we choose to classify this speech-activity in Briggs and Warfield, what is evident is that they are different. Different because different language-games are reflective of different 'forms of life'.

The 'oddness' of religious and theological language recognised by I.T. Ramsey and others would indicate that more than one speech-activity is being used when infallibility is affirmed by Warfield and Briggs.

One observes in Warfield description, confession and the language of devotion. In Briggs, the non-verifiable nature of his assertion causes him to substitute description for prescription in terms of stating what the Bible may

accomplish under certain circumstances, or reflection, in terms of what the Bible accomplished in him. The elements of confession and devotion are also to be found.

The Fundamental cleavage is however on Warfield engaging in speech-activity which emphasises what the Bible is ; while Briggs, although using the same words, emphasises what the Bible does.

In this descriptive analytical study which we have developed in the light of Wittgenstein's later writings, the two areas which have exposed theological disagreement between Warfield and Briggs is in semantic and speech-activity usage. The other area is also implicitly divisive. It is related to semantic usage and in particular their differences in epistemology. Warfield's monism causes him to place on the same level, the knowledge of God, man, the world, the Bible, logic, aesthetics, etc. When therefore he speaks of the 'infallible' Bible, the language of infallibility he uses is of the same nature (according to his common sense approach) as that which he uses of God and of his Word. Briggs' epistemological dualism enables him to use the term 'infallible' exclusively concerning the knowledge of God. The knowledge of God is unique so therefore the language he uses concerning him is unique. Warfield's non-acceptance of theological language being sui generis is further cause for disagreement.

The vocation of a philosopher (and by implication a philosophical theologian), according to Wittgenstein, is to probe at depth into the real function of the words, sentences and propositions under scrutiny. He writes:

"Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language ; it can in the end only describe it. For it cannot give any foundation either. It leaves everything as it is."<sup>1</sup>

The goal for a philosopher is complete clarity in order that the problem will not so much be solved as disappear. The demands of openness and sensitivity from the student are enormous if this objective is to be accomplished.

The problem before us was simply : why should the two theologians in the same theological tradition using the same word 'infallible' disagree so profoundly in what they mean. All that can be claimed by the application of Wittgenstein's method is a contribution to the solving of the problem.

---

1. Wittgenstein, L., 'Philosophical Investigations', Ibid., p.124.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Bibliographical material is listed under Primary and Secondary Sources. The Primary Sources are those related to Wittgenstein, Warfield and Briggs respectively.

### PRIMARY SOURCES:

#### LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

(Here we list only those later writings which have a bearing on the thesis)

Wittgenstein, Ludwig, Philosophical Investigations, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Blackwell, Oxford, 1963.

---

\_\_\_\_\_, Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief, compiled from notes taken by Yorick Smythies, Rush Rhees and James Taylor, ed. Cyril Barrett, Blackwell, Oxford, 1966.

#### BENJAMIN BRECKINRIDGE WARFIELD

##### BOOKS

Warfield, B.B., An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, W.R. Nicholl, ed., The Theological Educator, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1886.

---

\_\_\_\_\_, The Power of God unto Salvation, Philadelphia, Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1903.

---

\_\_\_\_\_, The Lord of Glory, New York, American Tract Society, 1907. reprint, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1950.

- \_\_\_\_\_, The Saviour of the World, New York, Hodder and Stoughton, 1914. Reprint Cherry Hill, N.J., Mack, 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Plan of Salvation, Philadelphia, Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1915, revised, ed. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Faith and Life, New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1916.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Counterfeit Miracles, New York, Scribner, 1918. Reprinted under title Miracles : Yesterday and Today, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1953.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Revelation and Inspiration, New York, Oxford, 1927.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Biblical Doctrines, New York, Oxford, 1929.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Christology and Criticism, New York, Oxford, 1929.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Studies in Tertullian and Augustine, New York, Oxford, 1930.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Calvin and Calvinism, New York, Oxford, 1931.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Westminster Assembly and its Work, New York, Oxford, 1931.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Studies in Perfectionism, New York, Oxford, 1931. (2 vols).
- \_\_\_\_\_, Studies in Theology, New York, Oxford, 1932.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Critical Reviews, New York, Oxford, 1932.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, London, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1951.

\_\_\_\_\_, The Person and Work of Christ, Philadelphia, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1950.

\_\_\_\_\_, Biblical and Theological Studies, Philadelphia, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1952.

\_\_\_\_\_, Calvin and Augustine, Philadelphia, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1956.

\_\_\_\_\_, Perfectionism, Philadelphia, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1958.

\_\_\_\_\_, Biblical Foundations, London, Intervarsity Press, 1958.

\_\_\_\_\_, Selected Shorter Writings of B.B. Warfield Vol.1, Nutley, N.J., Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970.

\_\_\_\_\_, Selected Shorter Writings of B.B. Warfield Vol.11, Nutley, N.J., Presbyterian and Reformed, 1973.

The above includes those Articles referred to in the course of the thesis with the exception of what is listed below.

#### ARTICLES:

Warfield, B.B., with A.A. Hodge, 'Inspiration', The Presbyterian Review 11, (April 1881), pp.225-260.

\_\_\_\_\_, The Genuineness of Mark 16:9-20, Sunday School Times XXIV, (D2, 1882) p.755f.

\_\_\_\_\_, Inspiration and the Spurious Verses at the end of Mark, Sunday School Times XXV, (Ja.20, 1883), p.36f.

\_\_\_\_\_, Dr. Briggs Critical Method, Interior XIV, (F.4, 1882), p.2.



\_\_\_\_\_, Messianic Psalms of the New Testament,  
Expositor, 3d. Series II (O. and N, 1885)  
pp.301-309, pp.321-327.

\_\_\_\_\_, "What should be the Attitude of the American  
Clergy towards the Revised Version of the  
Scriptures?" Homiletic Review XI, (F. 1886),  
pp.106-112.

\_\_\_\_\_, Paul's Doctrine of the Old Testament,  
Presbyterian Quarterly III (Jl. 1889), pp.389-406.

\_\_\_\_\_, Dr. Briggs 'Shortest Catechism' Examined,  
The Detroit Free Press, (My 27, 1891).

\_\_\_\_\_, Late Discussions of Kenosis, Presbyterian  
and Reformed Review X (O.1899), pp.700-725.

\_\_\_\_\_, Dr. Dods' Doctrine of Holy Scripture, The  
Bible Student and Teacher IV, (Ja. 1906),  
pp.1-10.

\_\_\_\_\_, Limited Inspiration, Philadelphia, Presbyterian  
and Reformed, 1961.

#### CHARLES AUGUSTUS BRIGGS

#### BOOKS

Briggs, C.A., Address (on Exegetical Theology), Inauguration  
as Davenport Professor of Hebrew and the  
Cognate Languages in Union Theological Seminary,  
New York, N.Y., Rogers and Sherwood, 1876.

\_\_\_\_\_, Biblical Study, its Principles, Methods, and  
History, together with a Catalogue of Books of  
Reference, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1884.

\_\_\_\_\_, American Presbyterianism, Scribners and Sons,  
1885.

- \_\_\_\_\_, Whither? A Theological Question for the Times, New York, Scribners & Sons, 1889.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Authority of Holy Scripture, Inaugural Address in Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1891. Published in Inspiration and Inerrancy, London, James Clarke, 1891.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Bible, Church and Reason, New York, Scribners, 1892.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch, New York, Charles Scribners, 1893.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Defence of Prof. Briggs before the Presbytery of New York, 1892, New York, Scribners, 1893.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., G.A., Presbyterian Church U.S.A., against Rev. C.A. Briggs, Notice of Appeal and Appeal to the G.A. from the... 1893 ... record of all proceedings, N.Y., Rankin, 1893.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Incarnation of the Lord, A Series of Sermons tracing the unfolding of the Doctrine of the Incarnation in the New Testament, N.Y. Scribner, Sept. 13, 1902, PP.xi, 243.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Ethical Teaching of Jesus, N.Y., Charles Scribners, 1904.
- \_\_\_\_\_, New Light on the Life of Jesus, N.Y., Scribners, 1904.
- \_\_\_\_\_, with Friedrich Von Hugel, The Papal Commission and the Pentateuch, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1906.
- \_\_\_\_\_, (edited by E.G. Briggs), A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms, N.Y., Scribners, Sept. 1906, 2 Vols.

- \_\_\_\_\_, Analysis of Isaiah 40-62. Old Testament and Semitic Studies in Memory of William Ramsey Harper, Chicago, U. of C.P., 1908.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Church Unity, N.Y., Charles Scribners Sons, 1909.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Essays in Modern Theology and Related Subjects, N.Y., Scribner, 1911.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Theological Symbolics, N.Y., Scribner, 1914.
- \_\_\_\_\_, (edited by E.G. Briggs), History of the Study of Theology, London, Duckworth & Co., 1916.

#### ARTICLES

- Briggs, C.A., Critical Theories of the Sacred Scriptures in Relation to their Inspiration, Presbyterian Review, 2, (1881), p.551.
- \_\_\_\_\_, A Critical Study of the History of Higher Criticism, Presbyterian Review, 1883, pp.129-130.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Newspaper Clippings about Articles by Prof. Briggs (M. Lowrie, Samuel T. Scrapbook)
- \_\_\_\_\_, Clippings from various Church Papers concerning C.A. Briggs, (Presbyterian Historical Association), Philadelphia.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Terms of Subscription of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., Independent, Vol.41, 1889. N.Y., pp.1528-1529.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Genesis of the Ten Words, Sunday School Times, Vol. 29, Phil Wattles, 1887, pp.355-356.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Lament of David over Saul and Jonathan, Sunday School Times, Vol, 31, Phil. Wattles, 1889, pp.563-564.



- \_\_\_\_\_, Robertson Smith's Prophets of Israel,  
Presbyterian Review 2, (1882-1883), pp.8-14.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Robertson Smith Case, Presbyterian  
Review, I (1880), pp.737-745.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Virgin Birth of Our Lord, American Journal  
of Theology, Vol.12, V. & C. Press, Chicago,  
1809, pp.189-210.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Criticism and Dogma, N.Y., North American  
Review, Vol.182, 1906, pp.861-874.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The New Testament Doctrine of the Church,  
American Journal of Theology Vol.4, U. of  
Chicago Press, Chicago, 1900, pp.1-22.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Poem of the Fallen Man, Reformed Quarterly  
Review, Vol.32, Phil. Ref. Church Public  
Board, 1885, pp.311-333.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Documentary History of the Westminster  
Assembly, The Presbyterian Review (Jan. 1880),  
pp.127-163.

## SECONDARY SOURCES:

### BOOKS

- Abba, Raymond, Nature and Authority of the Bible, James  
Clarke, 1958.
- Ahlstrom Sydney, A Religious History of the American  
People, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1974.
- Alexander Archibald, Evidences of the Authenticity,  
Inspiration and Canonical Authority of the Holy  
Scriptures, Phil. Presbyterian Board of Publication:  
183- ?

- Allison, Leon, M., The Doctrine of Scripture in the Theology of John Calvin and Frances Turretin, (Th.M. Thesis), Princeton Seminary, 1958.
- Acouso, Schokel, Luis, Understanding Biblical Research, Trans., by Peter J. McCord, New York, Herder and Herder, 1963.
- Alston, Wm. P., Philosophy of Language, N.J., Englewood, Prentice Hall Inc., 1964.
- Ambrose, Alice and Morris Lazerowitz, (Eds) Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophy and Language, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., N.Y., Humanities Press Inc., 1972.
- Anderson, R., Our Dependable Bible, Grand Rapids, Baker, 1960.
- Arnold, T., An Essay on the Right Interpretation and Understanding of the Scriptures, in Sermons, Vol.II, London, 1832.
- Arntzen, Marinus, J., Inspiration and Trustworthiness of Scripture in Interpreting God's Word Today, Simon Kistemaker (ed), P.R.P.C., 1970.
- Atwet, Pauline Theory of Inspiration, Hodder and Stoughton, MDCCCL XXVIII.
- Aulén, Gustaf, The Faith of the Christian Church, trans., by Eric H. Wahstrom, Phil. Fortress Press, 1960, pp.57-97.
- Austin, J.L., Sense and Sensibilia, Oxford, U.P., 1962.
- , How to do Things with Words (2nd ed), Oxford U.P., 1962.

Ayer, A.J., *Language, Truth and Logic*, New York, Dover, 1946.

\_\_\_\_\_ et al., *The Revolution in Philosophy*, Macmillan, 1956.

Bailey, Warner, M., *Theology and Criticism in Wm. Robertson Smith* (Ph.D(unpub.), Dissertation), Yale University, 1970.

Baillie, John, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought*, New York, Columbia University, 1956.

Balfour, A.J., *Foundations of Belief*, New York and London, Longmans Green, 1895.

Bannerman, James, *Inspiration*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1865.

Barnes, A., *Faith in God's Word*, New York, Parry & McMillan, 1859.

Barr, J., *The Bible in the Modern World*, London, S.C.M., 1973.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Semantics of Bible Language*, London, Oxford University Press, 1961.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Fundamentalism*, London, S.C.M., 1977.

Barry, G.D., *Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture*, London, S.P.C.K., 1919.

Barth, Karl, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1936.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Church Dogmatics*, I/1, trans. by G.T. Thomson, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clarke, 1936, pp.51-338.



\_\_\_\_\_, Forward, in H. Heppe's Ref. Dogmatics revised and ed. by Ernest Bizer, Trans. by G.T. Thomson, London, 1950.

Barth, Markus, Sola Scriptura, Scripture and Ecumenism, Ed. L.J. Sindler, Pittsburgh, P.A., 1965.

\_\_\_\_\_, Conversation with the Bible, N.Y., 1964.

Bast, Henry, Authority of Bible, Chicago, Society for Reformed Publications, 1951.

Bavinck, H., Our Reasonable Faith, Trans. from Dutch by H. Zylstra, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1956, pp.95-127.

\_\_\_\_\_, Philosophy of Revelation, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1957.

Berne, K., A Conception of Authority, New York, 1943.

Beattie, Francis Robert, The Presbyterian Standards, Exposition of Westminster Confession of Faith, Richmond, Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1896.

Beegle, Dewey, M., Inspiration of Scripture, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1963.

Beegle, Dewey, M., Scripture, Tradition and Infallibility, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963.

Behannon, Woodrow, Benjamin B. Warfield's Concept of Religious Authority, Unpublished Dissertation Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1963.

Benoit, Pierre, OP., Aspects of Biblical Inspiration, Probe Books, Priory Press, Chicago, 1965.

Benoit, Synave, Prophecy and Inspiration (Comment on Summa Theologica), Desdee, 1961.

Berkouwer, G.C., Modern Uncertainty and Christian Faith,  
Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1953.

\_\_\_\_\_, Holy Scripture (Studies in Dogmatics),  
Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1975.

Bettex, Frederick, The Bible, the Word of God, Trans. from  
3rd Ent. German Ed., Burlington, Iowa, German  
Literary Board, 1837-1915.

Birch, G.W., Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. against  
C.A. Briggs, Arguments of G.W. Birch, Member  
of Prosecuting Committee, N.P. N.D., (Presbyterian  
Historical Association), Philadelphia.

Black, John S. and George Chrystal, The Life of Wm.  
Robertson Smith, London, Adam and Charles  
Black, 1912.

Blackman, E.C., Authority of Bible, Independent Press,  
1957.

\_\_\_\_\_, Cyril, Biblical Interpretation, Philadelphia,  
Westminster Press, 1957.

Bloore, John, Alternative Views of the Bible, New York,  
Macmillan Co., 1925.

Bogen James, Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language, Some  
Aspects of its Development, London, Routledge  
Kegan Paul, New York, Humanities Press, 1972.

Bohlmann, Ralph, A., Principles of Biblical Interpretation  
in the Lutheran Confessions, St. Louis Concordia,  
1964.

Boice, James, Montgomery, (ed) The Foundation of Biblical  
Authority, Zondervan, 1978.

Bromiley, G.W., Historical Theology, An Introduction, Grand  
Rapids, Eerdmans, 1978.

Brown, Jerry, Wayne, The Rise of Biblical Criticism in America, 1800-1870, The New England Scholars, Middletown, Conn, Wesleyan University Press, 1969.

Brown, James, Subject and Object in Modern Theology, Croall Lecturer, London, S.C.M., 1955.

Brown, Robert McAfee, The Spirit of Protestantism, New York, Oxford University Press, 1961.

Brown, W.A., Pathways to Certainty, New York, Scribners, 1931.

Bruce, F.F., Are the New Testament Documents Reliable? Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1965.

—————, (ed), Authority of Bible, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1968.

—————, Tradition Old and New, Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1970.

—————, and E.G. Rupp, eds., Holy Book and Holy Tradition, International Colloquium held in the Faculty of Theology, University of Manchester, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1968.

Brunner, Emil, Revelation and Reason, Christian Doctrine of Faith and Knowledge, trans. by Olive Wyon, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1946.

—————, The Word and the World, London, S.C.M., 1931.

Bryant, Robert, H., The Bible's Authority Today, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Augsburg Publishing House, 1968.

Bulst, Werner, Revelation, trans. by Bruce Vanter, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1965.

Burkhart, G., Understanding the Word of God, U.P.U.S.A. 1964.



Cooper, James., Confessions of Faith and Formulas of Subscription, James Maclehose & Sons, Glasgow, 1907.

Cotterell, Peter, Language and the Christian, London, Samuel Bagster & Sons Ltd., 1978.

11 Congar, Yves, The Revelation of God., Trans., by A. Manson and L.C. Sheppard, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1968.

Congbeare, John Josias, 1779-1824, Bampton Lectures for Year MDCCCXXIV, Oxford, University Press, 1824.

Counts, Wm. Martin, A Study of B.B. Warfield's View of the Doctrine of Inspiration, Unpublished Dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1959.

Costello, C.J., St. Augustine's Doctrine on the Inspiration and Canonicity of Scripture, Washington, D.C. Cath. University, 1930.

Cragg, G.R., Freedom and Authority : A Study of English Thought in the Early 17th Century, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1975.

Craig, Samuel, G., B.B. Warfield. In Biblical and Theological Studies, Philadelphia Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1952.

Cremeans, Charles, Davis, The Reception of Calvinistic Thought in England, Illinois Studies in Social Sciences, XXXI, Urbana, Illinois, 1949.

Crombie, A.C., Augustine to Galileo, History of Science, A.D. 400-1650, London, Falcon Press Ltd., 1952.

Cunliffe, Jones, L., Authority of the Biblical Revelation, James Clarke, 1945.

Burtchae11, James Tunstead, Catholic Theories of Biblical Inspiration since 1810 : A Review and Critique, Cambridge, University Press, 1969.

Burnaby, John, In What Sense is the Bible Inspired? London, S.P.C.K., 1960.

Cameron, Nigel M. de S., Criticism in Controversy, Ph.D. Unpublished Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1981.

Carnell, E.J., The Case for Orthodox Theology, London, Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1961.

Cell, Edward, Language Existence and God, New York, Abingdon, 1971.

Childs, B., Biblical Theology in Crisis, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1970.

Christian Reformed Church Board of Publications, The Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority, Grand Rapids, 1972.

Christian, William, A., Meaning and Truth in Religion, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1964.

Clark, Gordon, H., What do Presbyterians Believe? The Westminster Confessions Yesterday and Today, Philadelphia, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1965.

Clowney, Ed. P., Another Foundation, The Presbyterian Confessional Crisis, Philadelphia, Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co.,

Coleridge, S.T., Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit : Letters on the Inspiration of the Scriptures, London, 1840 (rep. 1950).

Coolidge, J.S., Pauline Renaissance in England, London, Clarendon, 1970.

Cunningham, W., Historical Theology, Vol.I, Edinburgh,  
T. & T. Clark, MDCCLXX 3rd Edition, pp.184-189.

Curtis, W., Human Element in the Inspiration of the Holy  
Scriptures, London, Appleton, 1867.

Dakin, A., Calvinism, London, Duckworth, c.1940, p.189.

Davies, R.E., The Problem of Authority in the Continental  
Reformers, London, Epworth Press, 1946.

Davis, Charles, A Question of Conscience, New York, Harper  
& Row, 1967.

Davis, Stephen, T., The Debate about the Bible, Philadelphia,  
Westminster Press, 1977.

Denzniger, H., Sources of Catholic Dogma, 30th Ed., St.  
Louis, Herder, 1957.

Dillistone, F.W. (ed), Scripture and Tradition, Greenwich  
Connecticut, Seabury Press, 1955.

Dodds, Marcus, Bible, its Origin and Nature, New York,  
Scribners, 1908, pp.151-158.

Doumergue, Jean Calvin IV, Lausanne, George Bridel and  
Cie, 1899-1917.,

Dowey, E.A. Jnr., Confessions of the Church : Types and  
Functions. Report of Spec. Commission on a  
brief Contemp. Statement of Faith to the  
177th General Assembly, Philadelphia, U.P.U.S.A.  
May, 1965.

---

\_\_\_\_\_, The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology,  
New York, Columbia University Press, 1952.

Downing, F.G., Has Christianity a Revelation? Philadelphia,  
Westminster, 1964.



Downs, H., Power-Word and Text-Word in Recent Reformed Thought, Philadelphia, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1974.

Driscoll, George, F., The Presbyterian Confession of 1967 : Historical Origins and Ecumenical Reflections Studies in Sacred Theology, Series Two, No.196. The Catholic University of America, S.T.D., Ann Arbor, Michigan, University Microfilms Inc., 1969.

Dulles, Avery, Survival of Dogma, 1st Ed., Garden City, New York, Doubleday, 1971.

Ebeling, G., 'Sola Scriptura' and Tradition in The Word of God and Tradition, Philadelphia, Fortress, 1964, pp.102-148.

---

\_\_\_\_\_, The Word of God and Tradition : Historical Studies Interpreting the Divisions of Christianity, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1968.

Ebersole, Frank, Saying and Meaning in Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophy and Language, edited by Alice Ambrose and Morris Lazerowitz, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1972.

Elliott, Charles, Inspiration of Holy Scripture, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clarke, 1877.

Engelder, G., Scripture Cannot be Broken, St. Louis, Concordia, 1944.

Engelmann, Paul, Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein with a Memoir, London, Blackwell, 1967.

Essays and Reviews, London, 1860.

Evans, C.F., Is Holy Scripture Christian? London, S.C.M., 1971.

- Evans, D., *The Logic of Self-Involvement*, London, S.C.M., 1963.
- Farrand, S., *The Other Side, A Review of the Trial of Rev. Charles A. Briggs*, New York, Randolph, N.D.
- Farrar, A., *The Bible, its Meaning and Supremacy*, London, Longmans, 1897.
- Fenchet, Robert, *Interpreting the Scriptures*, Desdee, 1969.
- Ferré, Frederick, *Basic Modern Philosophy of Religion*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Language, Logic and God.*, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1962.
- Fhorovsky, G., *Bible, Church, Tradition : An Eastern Orthodox View*, Belmont, Norland, 1972.
- Flew, A. and MacIntyre, A., *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, London, S.C.M., 1955.
- Forstman, H. Jackson, *Word and Spirit : Calvin's Doctrine of Biblical Authority*, Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1962.
- Forsyth, P.T., *The Principle of Authority*, London, James Clarke, 1952.
- Fosdick, H.E., *The Modern Use of the Bible*, New York, Macmillan, 1924.
- Frei, Hans, W., *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative : A Study in 18th and 19th Century Hermeneutics*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1974.
- Funk, R.W., *Language, Hermeneutics and the Word of God*, New York, Harper, 1966.

Geldenbuys, N., Supreme Authority, London, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1953.

Gerstner, John H., Warfield's Case for Biblical Inerrancy, In 'God's Inerrant Word', edited by John Warwick Montgomery, Bethany Fellowship, 1974.

Gilkey, Langdon, Naming the Whirlwind, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1969.

Gill, Jerry, H., The Possibility of Religious Knowledge, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1971.

Glover, W.B., Evangelical Nonconformists and Higher Criticism in the 19th Century, London, Independent Press, 1954.

Gore, Charles, The Doctrine of the Infallible Book, London, S.C.M., 1924.

Grant, Robert McQueen 1917, The Bible in the Church : A Short History of Interpretation, New York, Macmillan, 1948.

Hagenbach, K.R., History of Christian Doctrines, Vol.1, Trans., by E.H. Plumptre, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clarke, 1880, pp.97-127.

---

\_\_\_\_\_, History of Christian Doctrines, Vol.11, pp.8-21 and pp.151-174, Vol.111, pp.39-70 and pp.312-321. Trans. by E.H. Plumptre, Edinburgh T. & T. Clarke, 1880.

Haldane, R. Haldane on Scripture, McLaren and McNevin, 1877.

Haller, Wm. Rise of Puritanism, New York, 1938.

Hamilton, Kenneth, The Protestant Way, N.J. (Fair Lawn), Essential Books Inc., 1956.



---

\_\_\_\_\_, Words and the Word, Grand Rapids,  
Michigan, Eerdmans, 1971.

Hannah, J., Rel. between Divine and Human Elements in the  
Holy Spirit, London, John Murray, 1863.

Harnack, A., History of Dogma, Vol.III, pp.191-239, Vol.VII.  
pp.80-84 and pp.246-248. Trans. by Neil Buchanan,  
Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1897.

Hartnack, J., Wittgenstein and Modern Philosophy, trans. by  
Maurice Cranston, London, Methuen, 1965.

Hatch, Carl. E., The First Heresy Trial of Charles Augustus  
Briggs, American Higher Criticism in the 1890's.  
(Unpub. Ph.D. Dissertation), State University  
of New York at Buffalo, 1964.

---

\_\_\_\_\_, The Charles A. Briggs Heresy Trial,  
Exposition Press, 1969.

Hartnack, Justus, Wittgenstein and Modern Philosophy, trans.  
by Maurice Craneton, London, Methuen & Co. Ltd.,  
1965.

Hebert, A.G., Fundamentalism and the Church of God, London,  
S.C.M., 1957.

Hendry, G.S., Gospel, Confession and Scripture, A Re-  
examination of Lutheran and Ref. Traditions,  
N.P. 1964.

---

\_\_\_\_\_, The Westminster Confession for To-day : A  
Contemporary Interpretation, London, 1960.

Henle, Paul, Language, Thought and Culture, University of  
Michigan Press, 1966.

Henry. C.H. (ed.) Revelation and the Bible, London, Tyndale  
Press, 1966.

Heppe, H., Reformed Dogmatics, trans., by G.T. Thomson,  
London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., pp.657-694.

Herbst, Jurgen, The German Historical School in American  
Scholarship, A Study in the Transfer of Culture,  
Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1965.

Hick, John, 'Revelation' in Encyclopaedia of Phil. Vol.7.  
Paul Edwards, New York, Macmillan, 1967.

High, Dallas M., (ed.) New Essays on Religious Language, New  
York, Oxford University Press, 1969.

Hodge, C., Systematic Theology, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans,  
Vol.I, 1952, pp.104-150.

Hodgson, L. and Others, On the Authority of the Bible,  
London, S.P.C.K.

Hoffecker, Andrew, "The Relationship between the Objective  
and Subjective Elements in Christian Religious  
Experience : A Study in the Systematic and  
Devotional Writings of Archibald Alexander,  
Charles Hodge and B.B. Warfield, unpublished  
Ph.D. Dissertation, Brown University, 1970.

Holmer, Paul L., Wittgenstein and Theology, in New Essays  
on Religious Language, edited by Dallas M. High  
New York, Oxford University Press, 1969.

Holmes, A. Faith Seeks Understanding, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans,  
1971.

Hookyaas, R., Religion and the Rise of Modern Science, Grand  
Rapids, Eerdmans, 1972.

Horden, W. The New Face of Conservatism, Ch.IV. New Directions  
in Theology To-day, Vol.1, Introduction, London,  
Lutterworth, 1968, pp.74-95.

Horden, Wm., Speaking of God, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1964.

Hubbard, D., Does the Bible Really Work? Texas, Word, 1971.

Huttar, George, The Use of Language and Biblical Interpretation, E.T.S. Vol.V, 4, p.116.

Hudson, D., Ludwig Wittgenstein, London, Lutterworth, 1968.

Huxtable, J. The Bible Says, London, S.C.M. 1962, Religious Book Club, p.148.

Johnson, Robert Clyde, Authority in Protestant Theology, Philadelphia, 1959.

Jones, Alexander, God's Living Word, London, G. Chapman, 1961.

Jowett, B., The Interpretation of Scripture and Other Essays, London, Routledge & Sons,

Keck, L., Taking the Bible Seriously, Nashville, Abingdon, 1962.

Kelsey, David, H., The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1975.

Keylock, L.R., Biblical Inspiration in R.C. Thought since 1870., Illinois, M.Th. Wheaton College, 1964.

Kierkegaard, S., On Authority and Revelation, New York, Harper, 1966.

Kirvan, John J. ed., The Infallibility Debate, New York, Paulist Press, 1971.

Kistemaker, S. (ed.) Interpreting God's Word To-day, Grand Rapids, Baker, 1970.



Klug. E.F., From Luther to Chemnitz on Scripture and the Word, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971.

Klemke, E.D., (ed.) Essays on Wittgenstein, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Chicago, London.

Kraus, Clyde, Norman, The Principle of Authority in the Theology of B.B. Warfield, William Adams Brown, and Gerald Birney Smith, unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke University, 1961.

Kuhn, Thomas, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962.

Kretzmann, Foundations Must Stand, St. Louis, Concordia, 1936.

Kung, Hans., Infallible? An Inquiry, Garden City, New York, Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1971.

Kuyper, A., Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology, trans. from Dutch by Rev. J.H. De Vries, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898.

Ladd, G.E., New Testament and Criticism, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1967.

Lampe, J.L., Member of Prosecuting Committee on Briggs Case : Merits and in Favour of Sustaining the Appeal, in McCook, Briggs Heresy Case, New York, John C. Rankin, 1893.

Latourelle, Rene, Theology of Revelation, including a Commentary on the Constitution 'Dei Verbum' of Vatican II. Staten Island, New York, Alba House, 1966.

Lecerf, A., An Introduction to Reformed Dogmatics, London, Lutterworth Press, 1949.

Leckie, J.H., Authority in Religion, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clarke, 1909.

- Leith, John H., *Assembly at Westminster, Reformed Theology in the Making*, Richmond, Virginia, John Knox Press, 1973.
- Levie, Jean, *The Bible, Word of God in Words of Men* (English version by S.H. Treman), New York, P.J. Kennedy, 1962.
- Lindsell, Harold, *Battle for the Bible*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1976.
- Livingston, D.P., *Inerrancy of Scripture : Critique of Beegle, M.Th. Trinity Ev. Div. School, Deerfield*, 1969.
- Livingstone, W.D., *The Princeton Apologetic as Exemplified by the Work of B.B. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen. A Study in American Theology, 1880-1930. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University*, 1948.
- Loetscher, Leffects, A. *The Broadening Church*, Pennsylvania University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957.
- Longenecker, Richard, N., *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans, 1975.
- Mackintosh, H.R., *Types of Modern Theology*, London, Collins, 1937. (Repr. 1964).
- Macky, J., *The Bible in Dialogue with Modern Man*, Texas, Word, 1970.
- Mackinnon, J., *Calvin and the Reformation*, London, New York, Toronto, Longmans, Green, 1936.
- Macquarrie, John, *God-Talk*, London, S.C.M., 1967.
- Malcolm, N., *Ludwig Wittgenstein : A Memoir (including a Biographical Sketch by G.H. Von Wright)*, London, 1958.

Margolionth, Lines of Defence of the Biblical Revelation,  
Gorham, 1903.

Markarian, J.J., The Calvinistic Concept of the Biblical  
Revelation in the Theology of B.B. Warfield,  
Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Drew University,  
1963.

Marsden, George, Fundamentalism and American Culture :  
The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism,  
1870-1925, New York, Oxford University Press,  
1980.

Marsden, George, The Evangelical Mind and the New School  
Presbyterian Experience, New Haven, Yale  
University Press, 1970.

Marsten, Francis, Ed., Hunting Heretics, or Hunting for  
Souls. Sermon preached at Broad Street Presby-  
terian Church, Columbus, Ohio, Feb. 5, 1893.  
Columbus, Hann and Adair, 1893.

Martin, Hugh, Inspiration of Scripture, Free Presbyterian  
Pub., 1964.

Marty, Martin E., New Directions in Biblical Thought, New  
York, Association Press, 1960.

Mavrodes, G.I., Revelation and Epistemology in 'The Philosophy  
of Gordon H. Clark', Presbyterian and Reformed,  
1968.

May, Henry, F., The Enlightenment in America, London,  
Oxford University Press, 1976.

McCook, John J., The Briggs Heresy Case before the General  
Assembly, New York, John C. Rankin, 1893.

McDonald, H.D., Theories of Revelation (Historical Study  
1860-1960), George Allen & Unwin, 1963.

McNeill, John, The History and Character of Calvinism, London,  
Oxford University Press, 1967.



Mead, C.M., Supernatural Revelation, Pilgrim Press, 1898.

Meyendorff, John, Meaning of Tradition : in Scripture and Ecumenism, ed., L.J. Swindler, Pittsburgh, Duquesne, U. 1965.

Miley, John, Systematic Theology, Vol.II, New York, Eaton & Mains, 1894, pp.481-489.

Montgomery, J.W., Crisis in Lutheran Theology, Bethany, Minneapolis, 1973.

\_\_\_\_\_, (ed)., God's Inerrant Word, Bethany, Minneapolis, Minn., 1975.

Moran, Gabriel, Scripture and Tradition : A Survey of the Controversy, New York : Herder & Herder, 1963.

\_\_\_\_\_, Theology of Revelation, New York, Herder & Herder, 1966.

Morris, E.D., Theology of the Westminster Symbols, Columbus, Ohio, 1900.

Mozley, J.K., Some Tendencies in British Theology from the publication of Lux Mundi to the Present Day. London, James Clarke, 1951.

Mueller, J.T., Christian Dogmatics, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, No. 1934, pp.90-142.

Murray, John, Calvin on Scripture and Divine Sovereignty, Philadelphia, Presbyterian and Reformed Publish. Co., 1960.

Nelson, John Oliver, The Rise of the Princeton Theology, Unpub. Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1935.

Newman, John Henry, The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Biblical Inspiration and Infallibility, (ed. J. Derek Holmes), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979.

New York Presbyterian Minutes, 104th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., Portland, Oregon, May 1892. The Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. against C.A. Briggs, Record of the Case including appeal to General Assemble and all papers pertaining to the case.

New York Presbyterian Minutes, The Evidence submitted to the Presbytery of New York by Prof. Briggs, Dec. 5, 1892 (incorporated in case against Prof. Briggs) Part II.

Netherlands Reformed Church, The Bible Speaks Again, Augsburg, 1967.

Niebuhr, H.R., The Meaning of Revelation, New York, Macmillan, 1946.

Nineham, D.E., On the Authority of the Bible, London, S.P.C.K., 1960.

\_\_\_\_\_, The Church's Use of the Bible, Past and Present, London, S.P.C.K., 1963.

Niven, W.D., Reformation Principles after Four Centuries, Glasgow, C. of S., 1953.

Orr, James, The Bible under Trial, London, Marshall Bros., 1907.

\_\_\_\_\_, Progress of Dogma, London, Clarke, 1901.

\_\_\_\_\_, Revelation and Inspiration, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1952.

Paché, R., Inspiration and Authority of Scripture, Chicago, Moddy Press, 1956.

- Packer, J.I., *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*, London, I.V.P., 1958.
- Patton, F.L., *Inspiration of the Scripture*, Presbyterian Board of Publications, 1869.
- Peake, A.S., *The Bible, Its Origin, Its Meaning, Its Abiding Value*, London, 1913.
- Peursen, C.A. Van, *Ludwig Wittgenstein, An Introduction to his Philosophy*, London, Faber and Faber, 1965.
- Pieper, E., *Christian Dogmatics, Vol.I*, St. Louis, Miss. Concordia Publishing House, 1950, pp.193-370.
- Pike, Kenneth, L., *Selected Writings*, ed. by Ruth M. Brend, Hague, Mouton, 1972.
- Pinnock, Clark, *Biblical Revelation*, Chicago, Moody, 1970.
- Pitcher, George, *The Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964.
- Pole, David, *The Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein, A Short Introduction with an Eiplogue by John Wisdom*, University of London, The Athlone Press, 1958.
- Polman, A.D.R., *Word of God According to Augustine*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1961.
- Porter, Noah, *Coleridge and His American Disciples*, *Bibliotheca Sacra and Theological Review*, 4, 1847, pp.117-171.
- Preus, Robert, *The Inspiration of Scripture : A Study of the Theology of Seventeenth Century Lutheran Dogmaticians*, London, O. & B., 1955.
- Quine, W. Van Orman, *From a Logical Point of View*, Cambridge Mass., Harvard University Press, 1964.



Rahner, Karl, Inspiration in the Bible, Questiones Disputatae, No.1, New York, Herder and Herder, 1961.

Ramm, B., The Pattern of Religious Authority, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1957.

———, Special Revelation and the Word of God, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1961.

Ramsey, A.M., The Authority of the Bible, Peake's Commentary on the Bible, 2nd Ed., ed. M. Black and H.H. Rowley, Ed., Nelson, 1962, pp.1-7.

Ramsey, I.T., Religious Language, S.C.M., 1957.

Reid, J.K.S., The Authority of Scriptures : A Study of the Reformation and Post-Reformation Understanding of the Bible. London, Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1957.

Reid, W. Stanford, The Present Significance of Calvin's View of Tradition, Surrey, Sovereign Grace Union, 1966.

Richardson, Alan, The Bible in the Age of Science, London, S.C.M., 1961.

——— (ed.) Biblical Authority for Today, London, S.C.M.

Rodgers, Max Gary, Charles Augustus Briggs ; Conservative Heretic, Unpub. Ph.D., Dissertation, Columbia University, 1964.

———, Charles Augustus Briggs, Heresy at Union, In American Religious Heretics, edited by George H. Shriver, Abingdon Press, 1966.

Rogers, Jack B., and McKim, Donald, D., The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible, Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1979.

\_\_\_\_\_, (ed.) Biblical Authority, Texas, Word,  
1977.

\_\_\_\_\_, Scripture in the Westminster Confession of  
Faith, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans, 1967.

Rowley, H.H., The Unity of the Bible, London, S.C.M., 1953.

\_\_\_\_\_, Authority of the Bible, Overdale College,  
1949.

Runia, Klaas, Karl Barth's Doctrine of Holy Scripture,  
Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1962.

Sabatier, Auguste, The Religion of Authority and the  
Religion of the Spirit, New York, 1904.

Sanday, Wm., The Early History and Origin of the Doctrine  
of Biblical Inspiration, London, Longmans,  
Green, 1893.

Sandeen, Ernest, The Origins of Fundamentalism : Toward  
a Historical Interpretation, Philadelphia,  
Fortress Press, 1968.

\_\_\_\_\_, The Roots of Fundamentalism : British and  
American Millenarianism, 1800-1930, Grand  
Rapids, Baker, 1970.

Schlink, E., Theology of the Lutheran Confessions, Philadelphia,  
Fortress Press, 1961.

Schmid, Heinrich, Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical  
Lutheran Church, Minneapolis 15, Minn.,  
Augsburg Publishing House, 1961, pp.38-92.

Schokel, Luis Alonso, The Inspired Word, trans. by Francis  
Martin, New York, Herder and Herder, 1965.

Schmans, Michael, Dogma, Vol.I, Chps, 9, 10 and 11, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1968.

Seynaere, E., Newman's Doctrine of Holy Scripture, Louvain University, 1953.

Shelley, Bruce, By What Authority? The Standards of Truth in the Early Church, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1965.

Shedd, W.G.T., Dogmatic Theology, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, (N.D.1 Reprint,) Vol.I, pp.61-150. Vol.II, pp.27-88.

Simons, Francis, Infallibility and the Evidence, Springfield, Illinois, Templegate Publishers, 1968.

Skelton, John, Scripture and Confession, Philadelphia and Reformed Publishing Co., 1974.

Smart, J.D., The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1970.

———, Interpretation of Scripture, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1961.

Smith, H.P., Appeal and Argument, New York, A.D.F. Randolph and Co., 1894.

Smith, G.A., Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament, Yale, 1899, New York, 1901.

Smith, George, D. (Ed.), The Teaching of the Catholic Church, Vol.I., New York, The Macmillan Co., 1949. pp.27-34.

Smith H.P., et al., Inspiration and Inerrancy, London, James Clarke, 1891.

Smith, James, Prof. Smith on the Bible and Dr. Marcus Dods on Inspiration, Edinburgh, J. Creig, 1877.



- Specht, Ernest Konrad, The Foundations of Wittgenstein's Late Philosophy, trans. by D.E. Warford, New York, Manchester University Press, Barnes & Noble Inc., 1969.
- Stanton, V.H., The Place of Authority in Matters of Religious Belief, London and New York, Longmans, Green, 1891.
- Stelt, John C. Vander, Philosophy and Scripture : A Study in Old Princeton and Westminster Theology, Marlton, New Jersey, Mack Publishing Co., 1978.
- Stenson, Sten Harold, A History of Scottish Empiricism from 1730-1856, Unpub. Ph.D., Dissertation, Columbia University, 1952.
- Stevick, D.B., Beyond Fundamentalism, Richmond, Knox, 1964.
- Stranger, A., The Trial of Dr. Briggs Before the General Assembly, A Calm Review of the Case by a Stranger who attended all the Sessions of the Court, New York, Anson D.F. Randolph & Co. Inc., 1893.
- Strawson, Peter, On Referring, Essays in Conceptual Analysis, edited by Anthony Flew, London, S.C.M., 1956.
- Strong, A.H., Systematic Theology, New York, A.C. Armstrong & Son, 1889, pp.58-114.
- Subiha, V., The Problem of Catholicism, London, S.C.M., 1964.
- Tavard, George, H., Holy Writ or Holy Church : The Crisis of the Protestant Reformation, New York, Harper and Brothers Publ., 1959.
- Thiselton, A.C., The Two Horizons : New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1980.
- Toulmin, Stephen, T., et al., Metaphysical Beliefs, London, S.C.M., 1957.

\_\_\_\_\_, The Uses of Argument, Cambridge, 1958.

Trites, Allison, A., B.B. Warfield's View of the Authority of Scripture, Unpub. Dissertation, Princeton, 1962.

Trinterud, L.J., Confessions of the Church : Times and Places, Report of the Special Commission on a brief contemporary statement of Faith to the 177th General Assembly, U.P.U.S.A., May 1965. Phil. 1965.

Turner, H.E.W., The Pattern of Christian Truth, London, Mowbray & Co., 1954.

Vawter, Bruce, Biblical Inspiration, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1972.

Von Campenhausen, H., The Formation of the Christian Belief, Philadelphia, Fortress, 1972.

Van Kooten, The Bible God's Word, Grand Rapids, Baker, 1972.

Van Til, C., Doctrine of Scripture, Dendulk Christian Foundation, 1967.

Wallace, Ronald, S., Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957.

Walwoord, John F., Inspiration and Interpretation, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957.

Warnock, G.J., English Philosophy since 1900, Oxford University Press, 1969.

Watson, Richard, Theological Institutes, Vol.I, New York, Phillips and Hunt, 1823, pp.5-262.

Watts, Robert, Fr. Briggs Biblical Theology traced to its Organific Principle, Richmond, Va., Whittet, 1892.

Wenham, J., Christ and the Bible, London, I.V.P., 1973.

———, and Rubert E. Davies, (Debate), Is the Bible Infallible? London, Epworth Press, 1959.

Westerman, Claus, Our Controversial Bible. Trans. and edited by Donald H. Beekmann, Minneapolis, Augsburg Publ, 1969.

Westminster Theological Seminary, The Infallible Word, Philadelphia, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1946.

Winch, Peter (ed.) Studies in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, New York, Humanities Press, 1969.

Wood, A.S., The Principles of Biblical Interpretation, as Enunciated by Ireneaus, Origen, Augustine, Luther and Calvin, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1967.

Woodbridge, J.D., Biblical Authority, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1982.

Young, E.J., Thy Word is Truth, London, Banner of Truth, 1963.

Ziff, Paul, Understanding Understanding, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1972.

———, Semantic Analysis, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1960.



ARTICLES:

Ahlstrom, Sydney, E., The Scottish Philosophy and American  
Theology Church History, XXIV, (Sept. 1955),  
pp.257-272.

Bailey, Warner, M., William Robertson Smith and American  
Biblical Studies, Journal of Presbyterian History,  
51, No.3, (Fall, 1973), pp.285-308.

Barr, J., and Others, Authority of the Bible, XXI, No.2,  
(April 1969).

Bell, R.H., Wittgenstein and Descriptive Theology, Religious  
Studies, Vol.5, pp.1-18.

Bennet, J.C., A Protestant Conception of Religious  
Authority, Union Review, 7:3-10, (Nov. 1951).

\_\_\_\_\_, A Protestant View of Authority in the  
Church, Theology Digest XI, (1963), pp.209-219.

Bernhard, J.H., Authority and Infallibility, Exposition XII,  
Sixth Series, (1905), p.172ff.

Bromiley, G.W., The Authority of the Scripture - the Attitude  
of Modern Theologians, Evangelical Quarterly,  
(April 1947), Vol.19.

\_\_\_\_\_, The '1976' Confession and Karl Barth,  
Christianity Today X, (Mar, 4, 1966), pp.15-17.

Brown, Ira, The Higher Criticism comes to America 1880-1900.  
Journal of Presbyterian Historical Society 38,  
4 (Dec. 1960), pp.193-211.

Brown, Robert McAfee, Tradition as a Protestant Problem,  
Theology Today XVII, (Jan. 1961), pp.430-454.

Candlish, Jas. S., The Doctrine of the Westminster  
Confession on Scripture, British and Foreign  
Evangelical Review, XXVI, (Jan. 1877).

Carnell, E.J., The Problem of Religious Authority, His, 10:6ff., (February 1950).

Clark, Gordon, H., Holy Scripture, Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, Vol.VI, p.3.

Coleman, Richard, H., Reconsidering 'Limited Inerrancy', Bulletin of Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, Vol.17, No.4, (Fall 1974), p.207.

Craigie, P.C., The Influence of Spinoza in the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament, Evangelical Quarterly, I, (1978), pp.23-32.

Cullman, Oscar, Scripture and Tradition, Cross Currents, (Spring 1953).

Curtis, R.K., Language and Theology : Some Basic Consideration, Gordon Review, Vol.I, No.3, (September 1955), p.97.

Danielou, Jean, Scripture, Tradition and the Dialogue, Theology Digest, IX, (1961), pp.38-42.

Dean, Eric, The Relation between Scripture and Tradition, Theoretical Statements by Calvin and Barth, Encounter, XXIII, (1962), pp.277-291.

———, Scripture and Tradition : The Problem of the Normative Relationship, Encounter, XXIII, (1962), pp.261-276.

Dejarfve, G., Scripture, Tradition and the Church, Theology Digest, VI, (1958), pp.67-72.

Dowey, E.A., Revelation and Faith in the Protestant Confessions, Pittsburgh Perspective II, (March 1961), pp.9-26.

---

Survey - Cont. Ref., Studies in Calvin and Calvinism since 1955, Church History XXIX, (June 1960), pp.187-204.

Duffield, J.T., The Crisis in the Presbyterian Church, from The Independent, (April 1893).

Dulles, Avery, The Theology of Revelation, Theological Studies XXV, (1964), pp.43-58.

Dulles, Avery, Reflections on Sola Scriptura, in Revelation and the Quest for Unity, Washington, Corpus (1968), pp.65-82.

Ellis, E.E., Authority of Scripture : Critical Judgments in Biblical Perspective, Evangelical Quarterly, 39, (1967).

Findlay, J.N., Use, Usage and Meaning, Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supp. Vol.35, (1961).

Foreman, Kenneth, J., Review of Westminster Confession for Today : A Contemporary Interpretation by George S. Hendry, Theology Today, XVII, (Jan. 1961), pp.540-544.

Forestell, J., The Limitation of Inerrancy, Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XX, (1958).

Fribery, H. Daniel, The Word of God and Propositional Truth, Christianity Today, VII, (1963), pp.19ff.

Fuller, D.P., B.B. Warfield's View of Faith and History, Bulletin of Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society XI/2, (Spring 1968), pp.75-83.

---

On Revelation and Biblical Authority, Journal of Evangelical Theological Society XVI/2 (Sept. 1973).



- 
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Nature of Biblical Inerrancy, American Scientific Affiliation Journal XXIV/2, (June 1972).
- Gaffney, James, Scripture and Tradition in Recent Catholic Thought, The Thomist, XXVII, (April, July, October, 1963), pp.141-169.
- Garrison, R.B., Vital Interaction : Scripture and Experience, John Wesley's Doctrine of Authority, Religion in Life, 25:263-573. (Autumn 1956).
- Gerrish, Brian, A., Biblical Authority and the Continental Reformation, Scottish Journal of Theology, No.4, (1957), pp.337-360.
- 
- \_\_\_\_\_, Confessional Heritage of the Reformed Church, McCormick Quarterly XIX (Jan. 1966), pp.120-134.
- Gill, Jerry, H., Wittgenstein and Religious Language, Theology Today, (April 1964).
- Grier, W.J., Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, Banner of Truth, 89 (Feb.1971).
- Harrison, E.F., Criteria of Biblical Inerrancy, Christianity Today, (Jan. 20, 1958).
- Hay, David, W., The Issues of the Reformation Reopened, Canadian Journal of Theology X, (1964), pp.177-186.
- Hendry, G.S., The Exposition of Holy Scripture, Scottish Journal of Theology, I, (June 1948), pp.29-47.
- Holmer, Paul, L., Language and Theology, Harvard Theological Review, Vol.58, (July 1965), No.3, p.241.

Holmes, Arthur F., Ordinary Language Analysis and Theological Method, Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, Vol.XI, p.131. Response by N. Geisler, p.139. Reply to Geisler, p.194.

Horton, W.M., Authority without Infallibility, Religious Realism, (1931), pp.277-306.

\_\_\_\_\_, Contemporary Protestant Theology and the Bible, The Journal of Religious Thought, 13:21-42 (Autumn/Winter), 1955-56.

Hurley, Michael, Scriptura Sola : Wyclif and his Critics, Traditio XVI, (1960), pp.275-352.

Interpretation, (January 1971), devoted to the subject of Biblical Authority.

Jacobs, C.M., The Authority of Holy Scriptures in the Early Church, Theological Studies, (1924), pp.195-233.

Jewett, P.K., Biblical Authority, A Crucial Issue in Prot. United Evangelical Action, 7:3ff (May 1, 1953).

Kaftan, J., Authority as a Principle of Theology, American Journal of Theology IV, (1900), pp.673ff.

Kaufman, G., Ground of Biblical Authority : Six Theses, Journal of Bible and Religion 24, (Jan. 1956), pp.25-30.

\_\_\_\_\_, What Shall We Do with the Bible? Interpretation, XXV, (1971).

Knox, D.B., The Authority of Scripture, Reformed Theological Review, Vol.IX, No.2.

Lehmann, Paul, L., Reformers' Use of the Bible, Theology Today, III (Oct. 1946), pp.328-344.

Lewis, Gordon, R., What does Biblical Infallibility Mean?  
in Evangelical Theological Society Bulletin,  
VI, I, (1962-63), p.18f.

Lindsay, Thomas, M., The Doctrine of Scripture, The Reformers  
and the Princeton School, Exposition, 55, I,  
(1895), pp.280-281.

Lindsell, Harold, Historian Looks at Inerrancy, Journal  
of the Evangelical Theological Society,  
Vol.VIII, I, p.3.

Loetscher, L., C.A. Briggs in the Retrospect of Half a  
Century, Theology Today, 12, (1955-1956),  
p.28.

Macphail, J.R., The Authority of the Bible, Scottish  
Journal of Theology, 9, (March 1956).

Mavrodes, G., Inspiration of the Autographs, Evangelical  
Quarterly, 41, (1969).

\_\_\_\_\_, Language and Revelation, American Scientific  
Affiliation Journal, XVIII, (December, 1966).

\_\_\_\_\_, Science and the Infallibility of the Bible,  
American Scientific Affiliation Journal,  
XIX/3, (September, 1967).

McKenzie, John, L., The Social Character of Inspiration,  
The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XXIV,  
(1962), pp.115-124.

McKim, Donald, K., Archibald Alexander and the Doctrine  
of Scripture, Journal of Presbyterian History,  
54, No.3, (Fall, 1976), pp.255-375.



Montgomery, J.W., Inspiration and Inerrancy - A New Departure, Meaninglessness of a Non-Inerrant Inspired Scripture, Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, Vol.VIII, 2, p.45.

Moorehead, James, H., Joseph Addison Alexander : Common Sense, Romanticism, and Biblical Criticism at Princeton, Journal of Presbyterian History 53, No.1, (Spring 1975), pp.51-65.

Moran, Gabriel, "What is Revelation?", Theological Studies XXV, (1964), pp.217-231.

Munk, A.W., The Basis of Authority in Religion, The Journal of Bible and Religion 20 (October 1952).

Murray, John, Tradition : Roman and Protestant, Westminster Alumni Annals, (1947), pp.4-9.

Murphy and Peters, The Role of the Bible in Roman Catholic Theology, Interpretation XXV, 1971.

Nicole Roger, The Inspiration of Scripture, B.B. Warfield and Dewey, M., Beeple, Gordon Review, Vol.VIII, Nos. 2, 3, (Winter 1964-65).

Nida, Eugene, A., Language, Culture and Theology, Gordon Review, Vol.III, pp.151(1957).

Nineham, D.E., The Use of the Bible in Modern Theology, Bulletin of the John Rylands Library IIII, (1969).

Noll, Mark, The Founding of Princeton Seminary, Westminster Theological Journal 42, (Fall 1979), pp.72-110.

Pannenberg, Wolfhart, The Crisis of the Scripture - Principle in Protestant Theology, Dialogue II, (1963), pp.307-313.

Payne, J. Barton, Current Resistance to Biblical Inerrancy,  
Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society,  
Vol.10:1, (1967).

\_\_\_\_\_, Partial Omniscience : Observations on  
Limited Inerrancy, Bulletin of Journal of the  
Evangelical Theological Society, Vol.18, No.1,  
(Winter 1975), p.37.

Peter, J.F., Warfield on the Scriptures, Reformed Theological  
Review XVI, (Oct 19, 1957), pp.76-84.

\_\_\_\_\_, The Place of Tradition in Reformed Theology,  
Scottish Journal of Theology, XVIII, (1965),  
pp.294-307.

Piepkorn, Arthur, C., What does Inerrancy Mean? Concordia  
Theological Monthly XXVI, (1965), pp.577-593.

Pike, Kenneth, L., The Linguist and Axioms Concerning  
the Language of Scripture, Journal of the American  
Scientific Affiliation, Vol.26, No.2, (1974),  
pp.47f.

\_\_\_\_\_, Linguistic Concepts, Unpublished (Privately  
distributed), (1968).

\_\_\_\_\_, Strange Dimensions of Truth, Christianity  
Today, 5, (May 8th, 1961), pp.25-28.

Piper, Otto, The Authority of the Bible, Theology Today,  
(July 6, 1949).

Pinnock, C.D., In Response to Dr. Daniel Fuller, Evangelical  
Theological Society Journal XVI/2, (Sp. 1973).

\_\_\_\_\_, Inspiration and Authority, A Truce Proposal,  
The Other Side, (May/June 1976), pp.61-65.

Pontifical Biblical Commission, Instruction on the Historical  
Truth of the Gospels, The Catholic Biblical  
Quarterly XXVI (1964), pp.305-312.

Poythress, Vern, Problems for Limited Inerrancy, Bulletin of Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, Vol.18, No.2, (Sept. 1975).

Preus, Robert, Notes on Inerrancy, Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, Vol.VII, p.127.

\_\_\_\_\_, The Word of God in the Theology of Lutheran Orthodoxy, Concordia Theological Monthly, 33, (1962).

Prust, R.C., Was Calvin a Biblical Literalist? Scottish Journal of Theology, 20 , (1967).

Rahner, Karl, Scripture and Tradition, Theology Digest XII, (1964), pp.3-7.

Renwick, A.M., The Authority of the Bible : The Attitude of the Reformers, Evangelical Quarterly 19:110-126.

Report of Faith and Order Commission, Authority of the Bible, Ecumenical Review, (Oct. 1971).

Ridderbos, H.N., An Attempt at the Theological Definition of Inerrancy, Infallibility and Authority in the International Reformed Bulletin, No.32-33, (Jan-April 1968).

Robinson, C.K., Philosophical Biblicism : Teaching of Westminster Confession concerning God, the Natural Man, and Revelation and Authority, Scottish Journal of Theology XVIII (Mar. 1965), pp.23-29.

Runia, Klaas, Authority of Scripture, Calvin Theological Journal, Vol.4, (April-Nov. 1969).

\_\_\_\_\_, What Evangelicals Believe about the Bible, Christianity Today, Vol.15, Nos. 3 and 4, (December 1970).



Russell, B., Ludwig Wittgenstein - An Obituary, Mind  
(1951), pp.297-298.

Sandeen, Ernest, R., The Princeton Theology, Church History,  
XXXI, (Sept. 1962), pp.307-321.

Sarse, Hermann, The Sources of Revelation, The Reformed  
Theological Review, XXII, (Feb. 1963), pp.1-13.

Scharlemann, Martin, H., Inerrancy of Scripture - Paper  
delivered to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
(Feb. 25, 1968).

Scharlemann, Robert, The Scriptures and the Church, The  
Lutheran Quarterly XII, (1960), pp.159-166.

Skydsgaard, Kristen, Ejner, Tradition and God's Word,  
Studia Theologica, XIX, (1965), pp.221-237.

Smart, James, D., Scripture and the Confession of 1967,  
Theology Today, XXIII, (April 1966, pp.31-43.

Smith, G.B., The Problem of Authority in Protestantism,  
Crozer Quarterly, (Oct. 1928).

Spitz, Lewis, W. Sr., Luther's Sola Scriptura, Concordia  
Theological Monthly XXXI, (1960), pp.740-5.

Stonehouse, Ned, B., The Infallibility of the Scriptures  
and Evangelical Progress, Bulletin of the Journal  
the Evangelical Theological Society, Vol.I : I,  
(1958), p.9.

Swanton, Robert, Warfield and Progressive Orthodoxy, Reformed  
Theological Review XXIII/3 (Oct. 1964), pp.74-87.

Taber, M.E., Fundamentalist Logic, Christian Century 74  
(1957), Vol.LXXIV/27, (July 3,) pp.817-818

Thomas, J.N., Authority of the Bible, Theology Today,  
(July 1946).

Wallace, Benjamin, J., Religion and Philosophy, Presbyterian  
Quarterly Review 3, (March 1854).

Wallis, Wilber, B., B.B. Warfield, Didactic and Polemical  
Theologian, Part I, The Testimony of B.B.  
Warfield, Presbyterion, (April 1977), p.4.

Ward, W., The Philosophy of Authority in Religion, Hubbert  
Journal I, (1902-3), pp.677ff.

Wiemann, H.N., Authority and the Normative Approach,  
Journal of Religion, XVI, (1936), pp.175-202.

Zerafa, P., The Limits of Biblical Inerrancy, Angelicum  
XXXIX, (1962).

\* \* \* \* \*